

Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS



BaLinkBayan

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One-Stop Online Portal
for Diaspora Engagement

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BaLinkBayan comes from the Filipino word “*balikbayan*” (a returning overseas Filipino) and the English word “*link*” (with its internet connotation).

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COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS



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CFO Annual Report



Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS

2014-2015

CFO Annual Report (2014-2015) Performance Summary

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A SOCIAL CONTRACT
WITH THE FILIPINO PEOPLE

“A Commitment to Transformational Leadership”

H.E. BENIGNO S. AQUINO III
President of the Republic of the Philippines

16-Point PLATFORM OF GOVERNMENT

POINT No. 10 which is migration-related:

X X X X

“From a government that treats its people as an export commodity and a means to earn foreign exchange, disregarding the social cost to Filipino families to a government that creates jobs at home, so that working abroad will be a choice rather than a necessity, and when its citizens do choose to become OFWs, their welfare and protection will still be the government’s priority.”

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) for the years 2014- 2015.

International migration is a dynamic process that brings about continual changes in the internal and external environment. It is therefore fitting that our response to current migration trend should likewise be dynamic, as we see fit in the light of intensifying globalization.

Since I was appointed Chairperson, the CFO developed and consolidated its programs and services with key programs in promoting policies and programs to strengthen and empower overseas Filipinos, using migration and development as the framework.

To fully address these initiatives, the CFO has embraced important community projects, researches, information sharing, extensive consultations and dialogues with partner government agencies, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, the academe, private sectors, the international community and the Filipino diaspora, needed for policy and decision-making process at all levels. It has also made technological advances that enhance services to our fellow kababayans all over the world.

The achievements highlighted in this report were made possible by the commitment of the whole CFO staff. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their exemplary service and commitment through the years. Their dedication and hard work has made 2014-2015 another productive years for the CFO. I am grateful for their efforts and continue to count on them.

On behalf of the CFO, I also wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our partners in government, civil society, international and multilateral organizations for helping us realize our collective accomplishments, inspired by the guidance of and love for God, our country and the Filipino people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Imelda M. Nicolas".

SECRETARY IMELDA M. NICOLAS

Chairperson
Commission on Filipinos Overseas

ABOUT THE AGENCY



Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS

An Overview

Established on 16 June 1980 through Batas Pambansa Bilang 79, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) is an agency of the Philippine government under the Office of the President tasked to promote and uphold the interests, rights and welfare of overseas Filipinos, and strengthen their ties with the Motherland.

The amendment of the Republic Act No. 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 and its implementing rules in 2010, through Republic Act No. 10022, expanded the definition of "overseas Filipinos" to "migrant workers, other Filipino nationals and their dependents abroad." Because of this, the clientele of CFO has been expanded, emphasizing the inter-agency coordinative character of the Commission which includes in its board all the Secretaries of migration-related government agencies: the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Tourism, the Department of Education, the National Commission on Culture and the Arts, the Department of Justice, and the Press Secretary.

- Filipino permanent residents abroad
- Filipinos who have been naturalized in other countries
- Filipinos overseas who hold dual citizenship
- Filipino spouses and other partners of foreign nationals
- Descendants of Filipinos overseas
- Filipino youth overseas
- Exchange Visitor Program participants
- Filipino Au-pair participants
- Migrant workers and their dependents abroad

VISION

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas envisions a community of well-respected and proudly competitive Filipinos overseas who contribute significantly to the productivity and well-being of the countries where they reside or work while maintaining strong political, economic and cultural ties with the Philippines.

MISSION

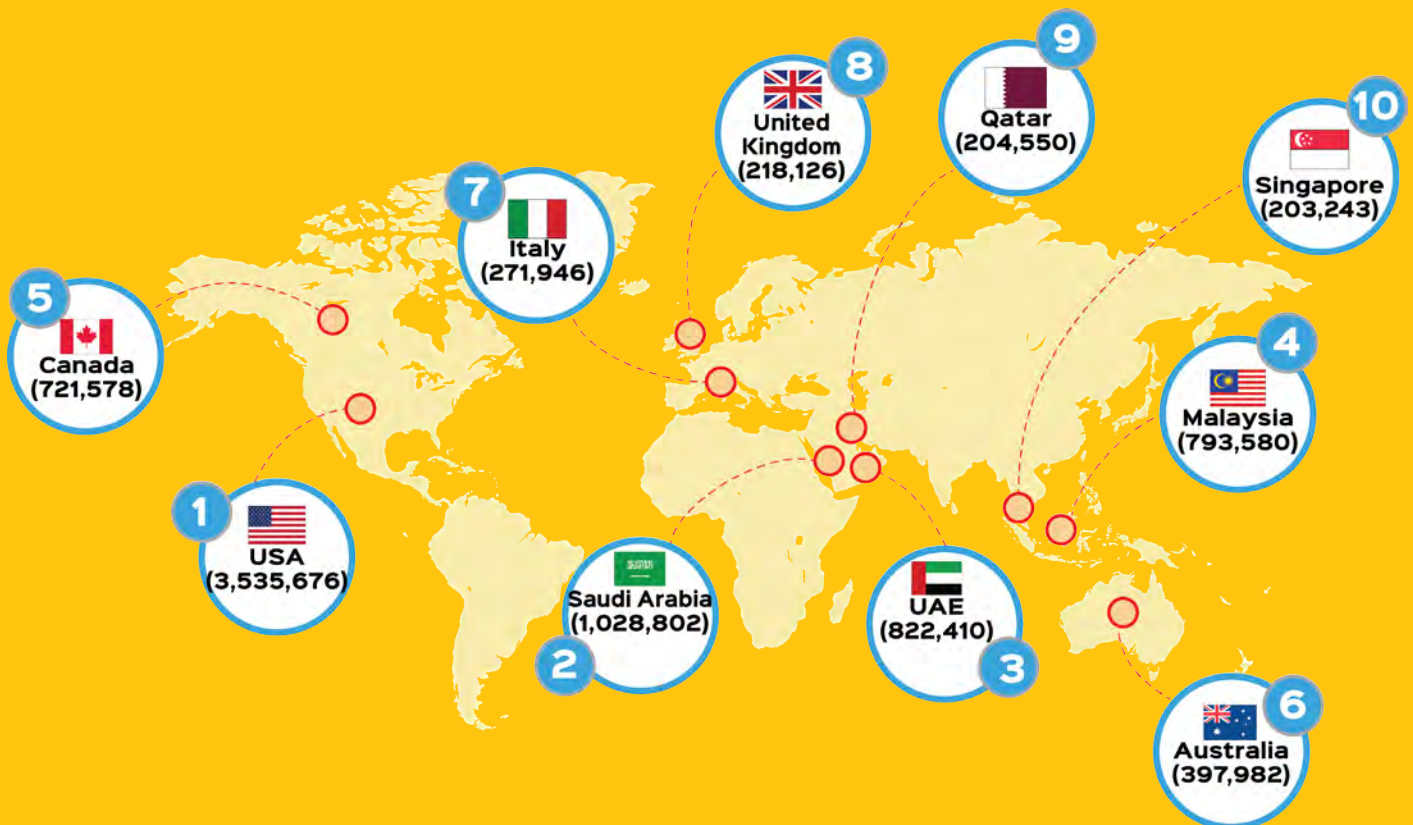
To be the Philippines' premier institution in promoting policies, programs, and projects with Migration and Development as a framework for the strengthening of and empowering the community of Filipinos overseas.

Overseas Filipinos Stock Estimate (2013)

As of December 2013, there is an estimated 10.24 million Filipinos working and living in more than 200 countries and territories, 48% of which are living permanently abroad while 41% are temporary migrants, and 11% are irregular migrants.



Top 10 Destination Countries of Filipinos (2013)



Ten (10) Point Goals of CFO 2010-2016

I. Policy Advocacy

1. To advocate for the mainstreaming of development policies on international migration at all levels of government: on international migration, its cost-benefit implications and the need for both national and local governments to maximize migration's gains while minimizing its socio-economic costs; that while international migration is a reality, government must create an environment that would make migration an option rather than a necessity; and that the government's primary responsibility remains focused on sustainable, integrated, equitable, nation-wide development, taking into consideration the country's economic, political and social structural problems and issues, especially in relation to employment, poverty alleviation, equitable distribution of wealth for improvement of all its citizens' quality of life.
2. To support and strengthen a policy environment that will promote and protect the rights, welfare and status of OFs and instill in them a strong sense of duty and obligation to society; and to formulate policies and programs to enable and encourage the exercise of their rights and obligations at all times.

II. Socio-economic Development

3. To facilitate the entry of development assistance from Filipinos overseas through the strategic and purposeful transfer of their resources, specialized knowledge, skills, and technology in order to address our country's most pressing developmental needs.
4. To replicate best practices in financial literacy, microfinance and social entrepreneurship to further leverage diaspora funds (i.e., remittances and savings) for investments and philanthropic projects.

III. Integration and Reintegration

5. To mitigate the social costs of migration by improving the ability of Filipino migrants to integrate in their host countries through CFO-conducted multi-cultural orientation sessions, and also to provide psychosocial services for the migrants and their families they left behind.
6. To facilitate the reintegration of returning Filipinos from overseas, by assisting them in identifying opportunities for engagements, livelihood generation, investment, and provide for a secure and meaningful retirement, thereby transforming the so-called "brain drain" to a positive "brain gain."

IV. Culture and Education

7. To promote the best of our national heritage, cultural patrimony and cherished traditions among Filipinos overseas that they may appreciate what it means to be a Filipino, even in a foreign land.

V. Institutional development and organizational strengthening

8. To promote the leading role of CFO in the formulation of policies and in addressing key issues on migration and development.
9. To improve and enhance CFO's institutional capabilities for lobbying and advocating for policy, formulation and reform; for coordinating and building consensus with all migration-related government agencies on issues/policies/programs of major concern to OFs; and for mobilizing stakeholders in the migration and development sector, to pursue a common platform through consultations and collaboration.
10. To provide accurate, timely and comprehensive data on international migration of Filipinos, in cooperation with government agencies and other stakeholders to ensure evidence-based policy formulation for the protection of OFs.

About the Diaspora to Development or D2D Program

The term diaspora is from the ancient Greek verb meaning “to sow over.” It originated from the ancient Greek tradition of migration and colonization (Global Diasporas: An Introduction by R. Cohen, 1997; ix). Nowadays, it may describe any population which is considered ‘de-territorialised’ or ‘transnational’—loosely lumping together immigrants, temporary workers, ethnic and racial minorities, refugees, expatriates, and travelers (“Rethinking Babylon: iconoclastic conceptions of the diasporic experience.” by R. Cohen. New Community 21 (1995): 5) The CFO has adopted the International Organization for Migration (IOM) definition of diaspora as members of ethnic and national communities who have left their countries of origin, but maintain links with their homeland.

In 1980, when CFO was established to provide services to Filipino migrants, coincidentally, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that the billions of dollars that migrants transfer out of their host countries through remittances far

exceeded official development assistance from donor states to qualifying countries.

In line with this finding, by 1989, the CFO institutionalized the *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* or Link for Philippine Development (LINKAPIL) as its main conduit for development support from overseas Filipino communities. LINKAPIL has channeled over PhP2.5 billion worth of development assistance over a twenty-year period.

The Philippine Development Plan (2010-2016) formulated by the administration of Pres. Benigno S. Aquino III has sixty (60) provisions on Migration and Development in seven of its ten chapters.

This is an affirmation of the CFO advocacy to mobilize Diaspora Communities to contribute to their home country’s development, or the Diaspora to Development (D2D) model.

The ten (10) programs are the areas of engagement that the CFO has devised so that Filipinos overseas may become true movers of Diaspora to Development.

The D2D initiative provides the framework and strategies for engaging the Philippine Diaspora in the development of 10 areas of interventions:



1. Alay Dunong Program (ADB or Brain Gain Program) – is a program that systematizes and strengthens the skills and technology exchange/transfer between OFs and the mother country, with initial focus in the fields of science and technology and engineering.



2. Arts and Culture Exchange (ACE) – is a component that seeks to promote and facilitate the exchange of artistic and cultural products and workers between the country and Filipino communities abroad.



3. Balik-Turo (Teach-Share) and Education Exchanges – is a continuing professional and vocational education exchange program for the return of overseas members of the academe to strengthen and enhance the educational programs and services of partner schools in the Philippines. The initial focus of the engagement is in Nursing and Teaching Education.



4. Business Advisory Circle (BAC) – is a matching and referral program where business experts provide advice to OFs in identifying, setting-up and sustaining business activities and partnerships in the country.



5. Diaspora Investment (DI) – is a program where new financial instruments and investment services are developed, enhanced and promoted for OFs. Included here is the rechanneling of remittances towards local and national development using various models being practiced here and abroad.



6. Diaspora Philanthropy (Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino or LINKAPIL) – coordinates and facilitates the transfer of material and financial forms of assistance from OFs to development projects in the Philippines. It provides tools to identify and prioritize the areas in need of development assistance as well as the perceived needs of the communities.



7. Global Legal Assistance and Advocacy (GLAAD) mobilizes the support of overseas and local Filipino lawyers and legal experts to provide legal assistance and advice to OFs in distress, as well as advocate for laws, policies and programs that empower Filipinos both in their home and host countries.



8. Medical Mission Coordination (MMC) – coordinates, facilitates and rationalizes the conduct of medical missions sponsored and organized by OFs in areas that require medical interventions. It also provides effective tools to identify basic medical needs of the communities, to monitor and measure the impact of medical missions.



9. Return and Reintegration (R&R) – focuses on providing returning OFs and retirees with updated information on services for a successful reintegration into local life.



10. Tourism Initiatives (TI) – focuses on supporting the drive for balikbayan tourism and encouraging migrant investments in small-scale tourism enterprises, like local bed and breakfast facilities, and other tourism-related services such as health and wellness services and medical tourism.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CFO's ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Policy Review and Formulation

As an important mandate, CFO provides advice and assistance to the executive and legislative branches of the government on matters pertaining to the political, economic and social concerns, rights and obligations of overseas Filipinos. Following are some of its inputs:

Partial List of Policy Inputs Submitted to various Agencies

CFO also provided and prepared inputs, speeches, researches, studies, and position papers.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Inputs on the <i>ASEAN-Korea Migration Network Project</i> submitted to IOM Migration Research and Training Centre on May 2014. | 13. Inputs on the <i>Philippines' Regional Consultation Workplan for the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative</i> submitted to the Department of Foreign Affairs and MICIC Working Group on March 5, 2014. |
| 2. Inputs on USAID proposal on Combatting human trafficking through an existing 1343 Actionline & website submitted to the Gerry Roxas Foundation on January 6 and 24, 2015. | 14. Inputs on <i>Global Forum on Migration and Development Documents</i> submitted to the Department of Foreign Affairs on April 4, 2014. |
| 3. Inputs on 5 th Policy Consultation for High Level Dialogue with South Korean delegates submitted to the Department of Foreign Affairs on May 20, 2014. | 15. Inputs on the <i>Roundtable Discussion on the Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development in the Philippines</i> , April 4, 2014. |
| 4. Inputs on the proposed Concept Note for Cultural Immersion of Filipino worker and migrants to Japan submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. | 16. Inputs on the <i>Global Forum on Migration and Development: Perspective from Asia and the Pacific</i> , published by IOM and Migration Policy Institute (MPI), May 2014. |
| 5. Inputs on <i>Decent Work Across Borders Project</i> (DWAB) presented in ILO Geneva. | 17. Inputs on <i>House Bill No. 3576 otherwise known as "Forced Remittance Bill"</i> submitted to the House Committee hearing on December 2014. |
| 6. Inputs on the proposed <i>Manual of Operations, Policies and Standards for Philippine Schools Overseas</i> submitted to the Department of Education on March 14, 2014. | 18. Inputs on the <i>Departure Guidelines for International Passengers</i> , specifically the inclusion of the documentary requirements for emigrants, spouses and other partners of foreign nationals, Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) participants and Au Pair Program participants. |
| 7. Inputs on Summer Work and Travel program under the Exchange Visitor Program submitted to the Department of Foreign Affairs on April 16, 2014. | 19. Inputs on the drafting of the <i>Human Smuggling Bill</i> submitted to the Congressional Technical Working group on September 2014. |
| 8. Inputs on the proposed cooperation between the Philippine Embassy in Ottawa and International Talent Center submitted to the Department of Foreign Affairs on June 20, 2014. | 20. Inputs on the drafting of the <i>Filipino Centenarians Bill</i> submitted to the House of Representatives on February 13, 2014. |
| 9. Inputs on the <i>Medium-Term Review and Update of the Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016</i> , submitted to the National Economic Development Authority on April 2014. | 21. Inputs on the <i>Proposed Creation of the Department of Overseas Filipino Workers (DOFW)</i> submitted to the House of Representatives and Senate on March 13, 2014. |
| 10. Inputs on <i>Democracy and Good Governance: Enlarging Overseas Voter Participation in Philippine Elections</i> – a project proposal by the Center for Migrant Advocacy with implementing partners from CFO, Department of Foreign Affairs and Commission on Elections submitted to the Gerry Roxas Foundation on April 2014. | 22. Inputs on the <i>Report of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)</i> submitted to the Philippine Commission on Women on March 2014. |
| 11. Inputs on <i>Creating a Sub-Committee on International Migration and Development, Rationale and Proposed Steps Forward</i> submitted to the National Economic Development Authority on January 10, 2014. | 23. Inputs on the <i>ASEAN Regional Conference of Senior Officials on Strengthening the Protection and Empowerment of Women Migrant Workers</i> submitted to the Philippine Commission on Women on November 2014. |
| 12. Inputs on the Philippine Government's <i>Comments to the Draft Concept Note on the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative</i> submitted to the Department of Foreign Affairs, US Department of State and MICIC Working Group on January 27, 2014. | 24. Inputs on <i>National Law Enforcement Coordinating Council Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessments-SOCTA (NALECC-SOCTA)</i> submitted to the NALECC on October 2014. |
| | 25. Inputs on the <i>proposed concept note for Cultural Immersion of Filipino worker and migrants to Japan</i> submitted to the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs on April 2014. |

26. Inputs on *The Philippines Millennium Development Goals Report for Women and Girls* submitted to the Philippine Council on Women on January 24, 2014.
27. Inputs to the draft *Joint Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cabinet Cluster and NEDA-Social Development Committee Resolution Adopting the Policy on Near Poor Income Threshold*.
28. Inputs on the *Philippine report on the implementation of UNGA Resolution 68/137* (violence against women migrant workers).
29. Inputs on the *House and Senate Bills on the Revised Philippine HIV and AIDS Policy Program Act* submitted to the Senate on April 20, 2015.
30. Inputs on the *First MICIC Regional Consultation* (South East, South and East Asian Regions) held in Makati City on March 23-24, 2015.
31. Inputs to the *Operationalizing a Dashboard of Indicators for Measuring Policy and Institutional Coherence for Migration and Development* held in Netherlands on June 10 – 11, 2015.
32. Inputs on the *Zero Draft Outcome Document entitled “Transforming Our World by 2030 – A New Agenda for Global Action”* for the UN Summit that contains the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets.
33. Inputs on the LGU’s guide in mainstreaming migration in development in local development planning and governance.
34. Inputs on the *US Medicare Portability* in the Philippines.
35. Inputs on the research of *International Migration Research Center* on the interrelationship between migration and women migrant workers.
36. Inputs on the research of Maastricht University on the status of remittance collection data in the Philippines and its policies submitted to Maastricht University on July 7, 2015.
37. Inputs on the proposed amendments to *Executive Order no. 252 “Modifying the Functions and Roles of the Inter-Agency Committee on Philippine Schools Overseas”* submitted to the Department of Education and the Committee members on January 14, 2015.
38. Inputs on the *Measures in Reducing the Socio-Economic Impacts of Return of Migrants to the Philippines Development* submitted to the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative at Brussels, Belgium on June 25-26, 2015.
39. Inputs on *Building Bridges: A Snapshot of Social Integration Program for Filipino Marriage Migrants in the Philippines and South Korea*, June 2015.
40. Inputs on the *Integration of the Nikkei Jin (Filipino-Japanese Descendants) “Home Away from Home”* submitted to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research Cifal, Jeju, South on January 2015.
41. Inputs on the *Psycho-Social training for the victims of Human Trafficking in the disaster-stricken areas: Jewish Distribution Committee* submitted to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, Cifal, Jeju, South Korea on January 2015.
42. Inputs on *Using Modern Technology in the Fight Against Human Trafficking* submitted to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in Cifal, Jeju, South Korea on January 23, 2015.
43. Inputs on revisiting the policy on *Au Pair Program: Existing safeguards to protect Au Pair from exploitation*, May 5, 2015.

(Please refer to www.cfo.gov.ph for the full list of policy inputs.)

Drafting of the Filipino Centenarians Bill

The bill sought to honor and provide incentives to all Filipino centenarians. As an incentive, every Filipino residing in the Philippines or abroad shall receive on his or her 100th birthday a letter of felicitation from the President of the Philippines for his or her longevity as well as a plaque of recognition from his or her city or municipal government. In addition, as a pecuniary incentive, he or she will also receive a Centenarian’s incentive of One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100, 000.00) from the national government and a cash gift from the local government.

The CFO lauded the bill as it covered Filipinos residing overseas. It provided the statistics of registered Filipino emigrants aged 90 years old and above from 1988-2012 to the principal author.

CFO’s position on House Bill No. 222 Amending the Republic Act 6955, otherwise known as The Anti-Mail Order Bride

CFO submitted its proposed amendments on Republic Act 6955, otherwise known as “The Anti-Mail Order Bride” to the lower house of the Congress.

The bill’s aim is to broaden the scope of unlawful and punishable schemes of matching Filipinos to foreign nationals. CFO’s salient proposals include (1) Prohibiting the matching of Filipino men and women for marriage or common-law partnership to foreign nationals by a third party engaged in the business of mail-order spouse; (2) Declaring unlawful the operation of the mail order spouse industry in the World Wide Web; (3) Confiscation and forfeiture of proceeds and instruments derived from committing the prohibited acts in favor of the government; and (4) Mandatory services to victims of the mail order spouse scheme to ensure their recovery and rehabilitation.

CFO's position on House Bill no. 2387, Amending Article 21 of the Civil Code of the Philippine – Prescribing Additional Requirements for Male Citizens or Subjects of a Foreign Country Desiring to Marry a Filipino Woman.

The bill proposed additional requirements for male citizens of a foreign country desiring to marry a Filipino national. Under the measure, the prospective foreign husband shall provide a certificate of good moral character and a certificate that he has gainful trade, business, employment or other lawful source of income to be issued by his country's diplomatic or consular official, in addition to the usual certificate of legal capacity.

While the CFO supported the author of the bill in safeguarding the rights of Filipino women, CFO didn't favor the proposed additional requirements as it contradicts the fundamental equality before the law of women and men as guaranteed by the Philippine Constitution. In its counter-proposal, CFO emphasized that prescribing additional requirements should be applicable to both Filipino men and women and not to the latter only. It further added that foreign nationals should be required to disclose his/her criminal record, if any, and marital background, if he/she contracted marriage.

CFO moreover, believed that the good financial standing of a foreign national, as shown by having a gainful trade, business employment, is not a guarantee that they will have a harmoniously married life.

Proposed Creation of the Department of Overseas Filipino Workers (Senate Bill No. 31)

CFO was not in favor of the said bill because it was based on the faulty assumption that only OFWs contribute to foreign currency remittances to the Philippines. CFO pointed out that foreign currency remittances are sent by a broad spectrum of overseas Filipinos, among which are permanent residents abroad, who do not depend on work contracts to reside overseas and do not fall under the category of temporary migrants or OFWs.

Moreover, CFO believed that the creation of a new separate department would only complicate management of the already complex policies, regulations and programs of government on recruitment and deployment, worker protection, workers' welfare and benefits, labor standards, repatriation, reintegration, among others. In its stand, CFO contended that the passage of the bill would give a wrong signal that the government has embarked on a labor export policy that contradicts the policy stated in "The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act" – which stipulates that "the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development."

Regular Programs and Services

Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) for Emigrants

Filipino emigrants are those individuals who leave the country to settle permanently abroad. They are required to register with the CFO and attend the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) which prepares them for settlement overseas. The PDOS is intended for Filipino emigrants 20 to 59 years old and has the objective of addressing the concerns of those permanently residing in other countries.

Country-specific PDOS are conducted for Filipino emigrants to address their adjustment concerns in their destination countries. Various topics discussed include: travel regulations, immigration procedures, cultural differences, settlement concerns, employment and social security concerns, and the rights and obligations of Filipino migrants.

As a regular function, CFO registered 80,689 emigrants in 2014. In the 1st semester of 2015, it registered 48,900 emigrants. The major destination countries of emigrants are United States of America, Canada, Australia, Japan, Italy, South Korea, New Zealand, Spain, United Kingdom and Germany.

The PDOS has since been conducted at the CFO Manila and Cebu offices but in 2012, the CFO decided to bring the PDOS closer to its clientele. A series of Mobile PDOS was implemented in San Fernando, Pampanga, Naga City, Albay, Cagayan de Oro City, Misamis Oriental.

In June 2015, it was held in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte which served and accommodated eighty (80) clients and was attended by clients from different parts of Northern Luzon such as



Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Benguet, and Cagayan Valley. The majority of the attendees were departing for the United States of America, Canada, and Japan.

The clients and the provincial governments expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the Mobile PDOS since the activity has minimized the cost of expenses and the time needed to attend the mandatory pre-departure program of the Philippine government for migrants.

Peer Counseling Session

The Peer Counseling Session is required for Filipino emigrants 13 to 19 years old. The sessions aim to provide a venue for the young migrants to discuss their own concerns about leaving their country of birth. The Peer Counseling enables the youth themselves to bring up their issues: from their unfamiliarity with the foreign language of the host country to fear of rejection, from their separation from friends in the Philippines to the possibility of bullying in their new schools, from feelings of isolation and depression to culture shock.

While sessions are not country specific, country profiles and settlement concerns are also discussed. No other government agency provides this specialized pre-departure program for migrating Filipino youth.

CFO provided services to 11, 235 peer counselees in 2014 and 8,217 in the 1st semester of 2015.





Guidance and Counseling Program (GCP)

The Guidance and Counseling Program (GCP) is mandatory for those Filipinos leaving the country as a spouse or fiancé (e) of a foreign national. The program is unique because it does not only provide information about the country of destination, but it also allows the counselees to have a one-on-one session with CFO guidance counselors.

During this time, CFO counselors are able to address on a personal level the issues of the counselee, to help him/her become empowered and capable of facing the realities of intermarriage. Certain sessions also require an additional two-day cultural orientation program, apart from the counseling. This is to address the need for Filipino spouses/partners to understand the difference between the culture of his/her spouse and that of his/her own Filipino culture. This enables the Filipino spouse to adjust better to the challenges of a cross-cultural marriage, bridge the communication gap with the foreign spouse and help him/her integrate much faster into the community.

It's worth mentioning that other Philippine government agencies also recognize the importance of the Guidance and Counseling Program especially in combating human trafficking in the guise of marriage. Completion of the program is required in order to secure or renew a Philippine passport. Certain foreign consulates such as South Korea also require proof of completion of the program before a spouse visa is issued to a Filipino. Such measure reduces the incidences of fake marriages and mail-order brides.

CFO counseled 22,837 spouses and partners of foreign nationals in 2014, and 11,159 in the 1st semester of 2015. Their major countries of destination are United States of America, Japan, Australia, Canada, South Korea, United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Netherlands and Taiwan.

Country Familiarization Seminar (CFS) for Europe-bound Au pairs

Filipinos leaving the Philippines as au pairs for Europe are required to register with the CFO. An au pair is described as a young Filipino citizen, between 18 – 30 years of age; unmarried and without any children who is placed under a cultural exchange arrangement with a European host family for a maximum stay of two years.

One of the CFO's registration requirements for au pairs is attendance to the Country Familiarization Seminar (CFS) to prepare them for immersion program in cultural and language learning in the specific European country of destination. The

CFS would be vital for the au pair participants to equip them with adequate information on topics such as settlement concerns, values, cultural and social realities in the host countries, health and safety issues, airport and travel procedures and support networks.

CFO registered 2,509 in 2014, and 1, 032 in the 1st semester of 2015. The major countries of destination of au pairs are Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Swede, Iceland, Austria and Luxembourg.





Community Education Program (CEP)

The CEP is an annual information campaign conducted nationwide by the CFO in coordination with various government agencies, non-government organizations, local government units and academic institutions.

The CEP seeks to assist prospective migrants in making informed decisions regarding working or settling abroad, as well as in generating community involvement on migration concerns. It also aims to raise public awareness about

issues concerning migration, inter-marriages, and existing government policies and programs directed against illegal recruitment, documentation fraud and trafficking, among others.

In 2014, CFO conducted the CEP in the provinces, cities and municipalities of Leyte, Iloilo, Cebu, Negros Oriental, Bohol, Camarines Sur, Lanao del Norte, Misamis Oriental, Bukidnon and Quezon City.

Philippine Schools Overseas

Philippine Schools Overseas (PSOs) are duly-registered educational institutions operating outside the Philippines and implementing the basic education curriculum of DepEd. PSOs are established to address the educational needs of children of Filipinos overseas, and eventually facilitate their reintegration into the Philippine educational system. The schools also provide a venue for the teaching and propagation of the Filipino culture and heritage among Filipino youth overseas, and serve as a locus for Filipino community activity.

The Inter-Agency Committee on Philippine Schools Overseas (IACPSO) was established through Executive Order No. 252 to serve as policy-making body and forum for discussion and resolution of issues concerning the establishment, operation and management of PSOs. Composed of five (5) member-agencies, the Committee is co-chaired by the DepEd and the Department of Foreign Affairs. Other members are the Department of Labor and Employment, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, and the CFO, which also serves as the Committee Secretariat.

To keep abreast on the current roll-out of the education reform initiative – the K-12 Basic Education Program, the Inter-Agency Committee on Philippine Schools Overseas conducted the 12th Conference of

Philippine Schools Overseas at the Plaza del Norte Hotel and Convention Center in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte on May 06-08, 2014. It was attended by sixty-one representatives from 27 Philippine schools in Bahrain, China, East-Timor, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar and United Arab Emirates.

Its 13th conference was held on 13-19 May 2015 in Palawan which was attended by seventy-six representatives from 30 Philippine schools in Bahrain, China, East Timor, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Tripoli, and United Arab Emirates. With the theme “21st Century Learning: Re-engineering Education for the New Millennium,” the conference highlighted the role of education reform initiative as a response to the challenges and emerging needs of education.

The annual conference is a regular activity to promote and strengthen Philippine curriculum-based education overseas to ensure a continuous education for Filipino expatriate students and support the unification of Overseas Filipinos families.

As of 2015, there are 40 PSOs operating in 10 countries with an estimated 32,000 as of S.Y. 2014-2015 students currently enrolled, from pre-school, elementary, and high school levels.





Sabah Project

The Republic of the Philippines and the Government of Malaysia signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation in the field of Education during the state visit of H.E. President Benigno S. Aquino III to Malaysia on 28 February 2014. The said agreement aims to strengthen and enhance bilateral cooperation between the two countries through conduct of mutually beneficial projects and activities in field of education, especially in providing alternative education to undocumented Filipino children in Sabah.

There are about 30,000 stateless children of Filipino ancestry in Sabah who do not have access to Malaysian education because of their undocumented status which has led to widespread illiteracy among the children. Many end up as child laborers or take to the streets and eventually become juvenile delinquents.

In response to this, the CFO conducted an official visit to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 26 – 27 August 2014 upon the invitation of the Department of

Education (DepEd) and the Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. The team aimed to prompt the early convening of the 1st Joint Working Group (JWG) Meeting to start the implementation of the recently signed MOU. Another important objective of the visit was to meet with the project managers of the learning centers catering to Filipino learners in Sabah and establish formal partnerships with each of them through the signing of the MOU on Community-Based Education Program (CBEP).

On 2014, six alternative learning centers (ALCs) in Sabah, operated by some concerned Filipino groups, signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Community-Based Education Program (CBEP) with the CFO, DepEd, and the Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. These ALCs taught the children with basic reading, writing and arithmetic.

Together with DepEd and the Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, the CFO organized and facilitated the capacity-building workshop for teachers and volunteers in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (LINKAPIL)

The unprecedented movement of Filipinos across national boundaries in the last several decades has led to a vision of a global community of more than ten (10) million people with a collective strength that can fuel Philippine economic development. While they have found gainful employment and even acquired permanent residency or citizenship in their host countries, overseas Filipinos have an abiding interest in the future of the Philippines. They remain deeply involved and maintain close ties by engaging in philanthropic undertakings and socio-cultural programs reflective of their continued concern for the motherland.

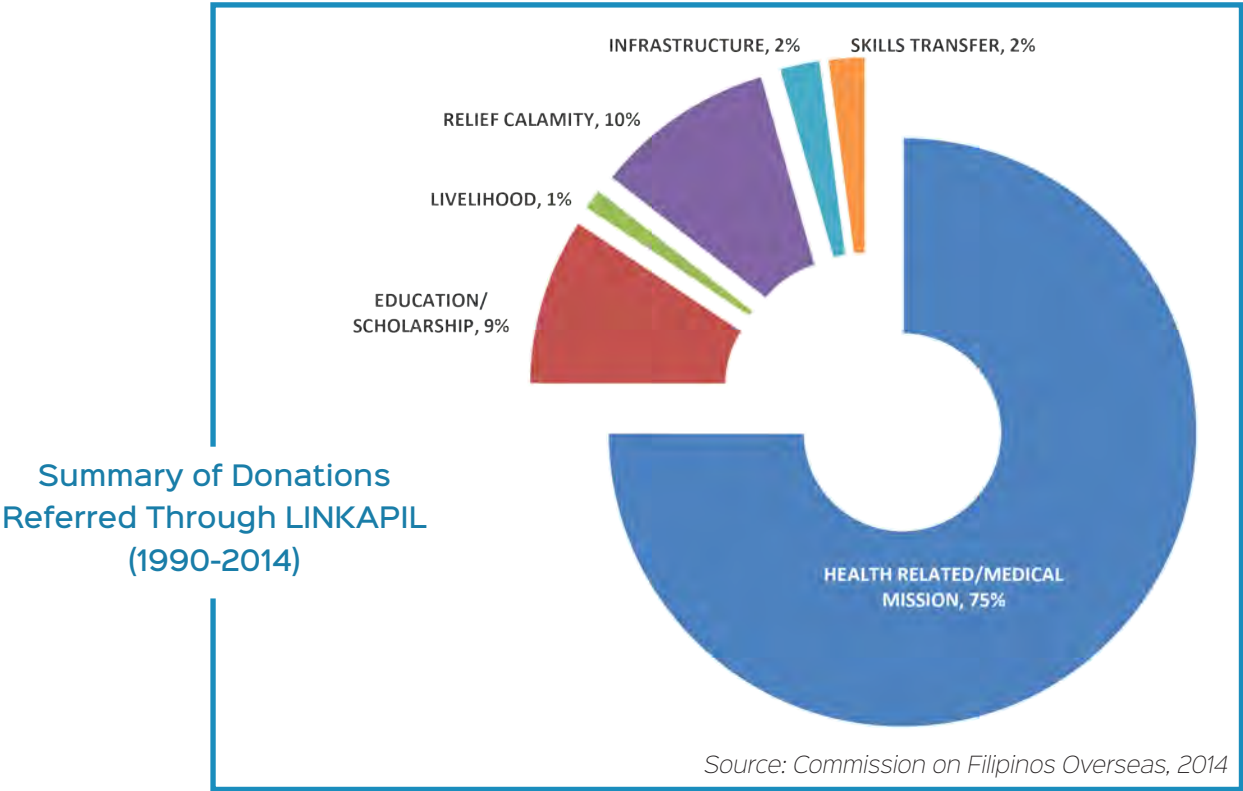
Inspired by the promise of this vision, the CFO designed the *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* or LINKAPIL Program in 1989, which has resulted to the forging of broader and deeper partnerships among Filipinos beyond borders. As a vehicle of service to fellow Filipinos, the LINKAPIL provides a mechanism for the transfer of various forms of resources from Filipinos overseas to support

small-scale, high-impact projects that address the country's social and economic development needs.

In line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG), this philanthropic diaspora initiative supports projects that address the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, achievement of universal primary education, reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health and environmental sustainability.

In 2014, P240.53 million worth of donations was channeled through the LINKAPIL Program helping 237,051 beneficiaries from 39 provinces, including Metro Manila.

For the 1st semester of 2015, a total of P53.8 million worth of assistance was coursed through the LINKAPIL, benefitting at least 35, 000 individuals from 15 provinces, including the National Capital Region.



A. Health and Welfare - Medical Missions/ Feeding Program

In 2014, twenty-five (25) Foreign Surgical and Medical Missions were conducted in 10 provinces (Leyte, Antique, Eastern Samar, Tarlac, Cavite, Marinduque, Aklan, Iloilo, Pampanga, and South Cotabato) by seventeen (17) organizations from the USA and two (2) organizations from Canada. They are as follows:

1. Caring Hearts Dentistry
2. Rotary Dental Mission to the Philippines
3. Far Eastern University Alumni Society of Southern California
4. Medical Surgical Mission of Texas
5. Philippine Medical Society of Northern California
6. Third World Eye Care Society
7. Philippine Medical Association in Chicago
8. Marinduque International, Inc.
9. Rizal MacArthur Memorial Foundation
10. Philippine Medical Association of Wisconsin
11. FEUNRMFSM Alumni Foundation
12. FEUMAANI
13. Surgical Mission of Texas
14. Philippine Minnesotan Medical Association
15. Partnership in Mission
16. Foundation for Aid to the Philippines, Inc.
17. Church of the Holy Nativity
18. Arkansas Medical Mission, Inc.
19. Arkansas Philippine Association

The estimated beneficiaries reached 53,599 individuals with an estimated amount of Mission of PhP 132,127,000.00.

An estimated amount of P97,280,381.46 was also accounted for the donation of medical supplies and equipment with 154,318 beneficiaries.

For the 1st semester of 2015, twelve (12) FSMMs were conducted in nine (9) provinces (Leyte, Nueva Ecija, Negros Occidental, Laguna, Batangas, Occidental Mindoro, Antique, Eastern Samar, and Zambales) by ten (10) organizations from the USA. These organizations include the following:

1. World Surgical Foundation
2. Society of Philippine Surgeons in America
3. Philippine Medical Association in Chicago
4. NAFFAA
5. Tuy Club USA
6. Pagbilawin Foundation, Inc.
7. World Medical Relief
8. Diocese of Joliet, Partnership in Mission
9. Philippine American Medical Mission Foundation of Michigan
10. Arkansas Medical Mission, Inc.

At least 4,468 individuals benefitted from the said mission and an estimated amount of PhP 44.7 million worth of assistance. Four feeding programs were monitored in the provinces of Isabela, Quezon and Iloilo.



B. Livelihood Project

There were eight (8) livelihood projects funded for 2014 benefiting 64 families from Iloilo, Palawan, Eastern Samar, and Negros Occidental with a total amount of donation of PhP 1,637,797.00. These projects are as follows:

1. Ten (10) Fishing Boats in Brgy. Abong, Carles, Iloilo sponsored by FtH
2. Seven (7) fishing boats and fishing materials in Brgy. Sua and Bagacay, San Dionisio, Iloilo sponsored by FtH
3. Five (5) fishing boats in Ajuy, Iloilo, sponsored by FtH and St. Ann Catholic Church, Virginia, USA
4. Two (2) Fishing boats in San Dionisio, Iloilo sponsored by AL Dura (Gems) International School in Jeddah, KSA
5. Two (2) Fishing Boats in Busuanga, Palawan sponsored by FtH
6. Ten (10) fishing boats in Balangiga, Tolosa, Leyte & Guiuan, Eastern Samar, sponsored by FtH
7. Ten (10) fishing boats in Cadiz City, Negros Occidental, sponsored by FtH
8. Fishing materials in Brgy. Gogo, Estancia, Iloilo and San Dionisio, Iloilo benefitting 20 families sponsored by the following:
 - Federation of Filipino Canadians of Brampton, Canada
 - Ms. Nenita Secuban, Arkansas, USA
 - Mr. Reynaldo and Teresita Sato, USA
 - Asia Philippine Friendship Society, Japan
 - Babaylan Denmark Odense. Denmark

For the 1st semester of 2015, two (2) livelihood projects were funded by overseas Filipino organizations and individuals from Germany and USA benefitting 173 individuals. These projects were as follows:

1. Establishment of La Purisima Shrine Credit Cooperative (LPSCC) in Palo, Leyte in the amount of PhP1,000,000.00; and
2. Two (2) Motor Boat projects in Biliran in the amount of P50,000.00.



C. Gift-Giving Project

Five (5) gift-giving activities were facilitated in Lian and Padre Garcia, Batangas, Silang, Cavite, and Paco and Taguig sponsored by Feed the Hungry, Inc. (FtH) and Philippine Australian Sports and Culture, Inc. for 522 school children and 50 senior citizens amounting to Php 143,928.00 in 2014.

At least six (6) gift-giving activities were conducted in Cavite, Batangas, Batanes, and NCR for the 1st semester 2015, benefiting some 407 children with an estimated amount of Php 173,105.00.



D. Small-scale Infrastructure Projects

The projects facilitated and accomplished under the small-scale infrastructure component of the LINKAPIL are the construction of two (2) new classrooms and repair of thirty (30) damaged classrooms in ten (10) public schools; construction of twenty-one (21) low-cost houses; and installation of two (2) water system projects in 2 public schools for 2014.

P6,547,893.44 worth of assistance, from classroom, housing and water well projects, was granted to benefit 1,910 individuals from this endeavor. Majority of these beneficiaries were students, and they came from the provinces of Davao del Sur, Cebu, Leyte, Iloilo, Masbate, Bohol, Batangas, and Surigao del Norte.

The donors of the said projects were the Feed the Hungry, Inc., The Filipino United Network-

USA, Pilipino-American Association of New England, Philippine Association of Metropolitan Washington Engineers, all based in United States of America; and the Al Dura (Gems) International School in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

For the 1st semester of 2015, CFO facilitated the construction of six (6) new classroom buildings and two (2) repairs of existing classrooms amounting to P4,142,188.00. Three housing units were also constructed in Carles, Iloilo with an amount of P75,000.00.

There were 1,100 who benefited from the said projects that include students from Tapas Central School and Bungsuan Elementary School in Capiz, Alangalang Central School in Leyte, and Humayingan Elementary School in Batangas.



E. Calamity Relief

Eight (8) relief operations were conducted in four municipalities in Sorsogon, Mariveles, Bataan, Daanbantayan, Cebu and Tacloban, Leyte benefitting 17,770 individuals sponsored by FtH, United Filipino Organization in Jordan and *ALA Eh* Germany in the amount of PhP 872,895.65 in 2014. No relief activity was conducted for 2015.



BACK TO BACK RELIEF OPERATIONS FOR VICTIMS OF TYPHOON GLENDA

On July 24 and 25, 2014, two teams from the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) implemented the immediate calamity relief operation for victims of typhoon Glenda, which was sponsored by the Feed the Hungry, Inc. (FTH) of Washington, DC.

After loading the first batch of relief bags to the hired truck, the first team proceeded to Mariveles, Bataan at 7:00 in the morning on July 24. While traveling, the truck busted its tires twice (1 rear tire while in North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) and 2 rear tires in Subic-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX)). However, the team stuck to its objective and arrived safely in Mariveles at around 5:00 in the afternoon.

Cooperation and assistance to the team were extended by the Municipal Government of Mariveles headed by Mayor Jesse Concepcion and Municipal Social Welfare Office of Mariveles, headed by Alfreda Tanuecoz with her staff, Rhey Quadro and Shaela Alejandro.

This relief operation benefitted 846 affected families from the coastal areas of Sitio Boracay, Brgy. Town Site, Sitio Porto, Brgy. Balon Anito, and Brgy. Biaan, in Mariveles. Each family received a gift bag consisting of bottled mineral water, 2 kilos of rice, sugar, coffee, canned goods, instant noodles, and biscuits. The distribution was completed around 10:00 in the evening.

On the second day, the FTH through the CFO also extended its assistance to the province of Sorsogon. Five hundred (500) families in Barangay Bulawan in the municipality of Prieto Diaz, eight barangays in the Municipality of Barcelona, Sitio Bari-is in Sorsogon City, and municipality of Juban, Sorsogon benefitted from the assistance provided by the FtH.

The students of The Lewis College (TLC) repacked the relief goods while the distribution was done in cooperation with Mr. Vince Nato, and the Sorsogon Chapter of Kapisanan ng mga Broadcasters sa Pilipinas (KBP). Each family received a relief pack containing 3 kilos of rice, 1 kilo pancit canton, pork and beans, vinegar, soy sauce, tuna and karne norte, a pack of biscuits, powdered milk, and bottled water.





HOW FILIPINOS ABROAD HELP THE MOTHERLAND

For several days in November 2013, the world watched in horror how Mother Nature unleashed its fury over the hapless areas of the Visayas, the middle sets of islands in the Philippines.

While Supertyphoon "Yolanda" (known internationally as Haiyan), left death, sickness and despair, it at least had a silver lining. As soon as the storm subsided, there was an outpouring of love and support from all over the world.

Filipinos overseas, as individuals or groups, were among those who quickly raised funds to be sent to the afflicted areas.

One of those who mobilized to help is the long-standing program of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), the *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* (LINKAPIL or Link for Philippine Development) program. LINKAPIL called out to many Filipino individuals and organizations overseas on behalf of the victims and survivors.

Individuals and organizations from 14 countries immediately responded.

An informal survey conducted by the CFO revealed that almost \$44 million cash and in-kind donations were mobilized by overseas Filipinos and brought into the Philippines.

One of the CFO's partners, the Negrense Volunteers for Change Foundation received P44 million (approximately \$1 million) overseas assistance. Although based in Negros, they extended assistance to typhoon-ravaged Northern Iloilo and other parts of Panay Island to make and give wooden and fiberglass boats to fisherfolk.

Behind-the-scene stories

Feed the Hungry Inc., a Washington-based organization established by Filipino employees of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, was one of the first to send funds for the speedy formation of a team to distribute relief packs.

Students, with their teachers and administrators, from different parts of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, East Timor and Kuwait did their part, including passing around coin banks.

The Department of Health (DOH) recorded a deployment of more than 1,000 foreign teams who participated in these medical missions, most of which were composed of Filipino health professionals.

Between the DOH and the CFO, an estimate of \$7.2 million worth of medical help (including medicines, supplies and medical equipment) were given through these missions.

Some individuals and organizations made use of their ingenuity and innovativeness to be able to raise funds and send help as quickly as they could.

One example of this is Rogelio "Vonz" Santos, a Filipino-American entrepreneur. Since many infrastructures, such as roads and airports, were rendered useless, Santos along with some friends, chartered helicopters to drop off basic necessities to the Visayan provinces. He pioneered the design and use of Butterfly houses, foldable and transportable quarters, for typhoon survivors.

Several Filipino groups in the US organized an "After the Storm" benefit concert for typhoon victims at Kennedy Center. The US-Philippines Society in cooperation with the Philippine Embassy and the Philippine Humanitarian Coalition was able to raise \$350,000.

The Bayanihan Council, an umbrella organization of about 50 Filipino associations in Abu Dhabi sent \$2,790 to the Philippines.

A group of Filipino women, married to Korean nationals, solicited funds from family and friends and was able to deliver at least 100 fishing boats to selected beneficiaries in Antique and Iloilo.

A Laos-based Filipino community was able to raise more than \$15,000, which were sent to overseas Filipinos whose families were affected in the Philippines.

In southern California, Filipino-Americans went on a five-kilometer fundraiser and held a prayer rally and benefit concert.

A "Brunch for a Cause" was organized in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates on a Friday which was supposedly a day off for most Filipino expatriates. At least 40 organizations represented by about 1,500 individuals were able to collect boxes of food, medicines, blankets and other materials, which filled two 12-meter container vans.

A benefit dinner was held by the Oxford Philippines Society, a group of Filipinos at the University of Oxford. The night of music and three-course dinner raised funds despite the short preparation time.

A special one-night only concert dubbed "You'll Never Walk Alone" brought together artists and celebrities in London's West End.

In Australia, collections during a Mass were sent to the Philippine Red Cross in Manila.

The Philippine Community of New South Wales and the Filipino-Australian Movement for Empowerment presented funds to the Red Cross.

In Hong Kong, some domestic helpers sent their wages to their families and communities who were victims of the typhoon.

Documents submitted by nominees for the biennial Presidential Awards for Outstanding Overseas Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas indicate that more than \$7.2 million worth of assistance from 35 nominees were distributed all over the Philippines. These were gathered from individual and community efforts abroad and channeled mostly through nongovernment and civic organizations.

Fundraising efforts continue

While the Philippine government has put in place a rehabilitation and recovery plan, it is heartwarming to note that efforts of Filipinos overseas still continue.

Classrooms are still being built and repaired. Livelihoods of different sectors are slowly flourishing. Despite the death and destruction, families have become hopeful once again.

'Diaspora to Development'

The slogan of the CFO is "Diaspora to Development" or D2D or "Magbalikbayanihan: Ang Kaalaman at Kakayahan, Ibalik sa Bayan," (Return to the Motherland your knowledge and your Expertise).

Overseas Filipinos are asked to come back and give back, not necessarily physically but virtually, not only through financial remittances but also through the so-called social remittances. We are hopeful that, natural calamities or not, Filipinos overseas will always be there to support their Motherland, one way or the other.

In most cases, to reach out and give back.

This article originally appeared in the Philippine Daily Inquirer on October 19, 2014. It was written by Dir. Marie Del Rosario-Apattad of the CFO.



F. Education

There were twenty-seven (27) scholars supported under the Adopt-a-Scholar Project of the Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (LINKAPIL) Program for S.Y. 2014-2015, 22 of which were high school students, while the remaining 7 are in college.

The educational assistance amounted to a total of P1,167,862.87, which include provision of school supplies to the school children. The beneficiaries were from Cagayan Valley, and NCR. The donors came from Australia, Qatar, and United States of America.

For school year 2015-2016, four (4) new scholarship grants were awarded to three (3) students from Technological University and one (1) student from the Lyceum of the Philippines with a total amount of P141, 499.64 worth of educational assistance. CFO also facilitated the turnover of book donation to two schools, one in Samar and one in Cavite, as well as school supplies to four schools in Cagayan Valley.



LAPIS AT PAPEL PROGRAM REACHES YEAR 2

The "Lapis at Papel Program" represents the expansion of a mission that began two years ago. Supporting the educational needs of the Filipino students, a partnership between the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and the Filipino Digerati Association (FDA) was formed. FDA believes that sometimes the only reason why most students fail is the lack of basic school supplies to do homework and participate well in class. This year, the FDA served more than 1,500 students from three public schools in Manila when they provided another set of school supplies last February and March.

Through this school supply drive, the FDA continues to support the educational needs of public school students and equips them with the tools they need to make their learning a fun and an easy activity.



G. Skills Transfer

For 2014, CFO monitored and facilitated the turn over of scholarship grants under the Enhancement Training Sponsorship project (ETSP) amounting to P661,476.76.

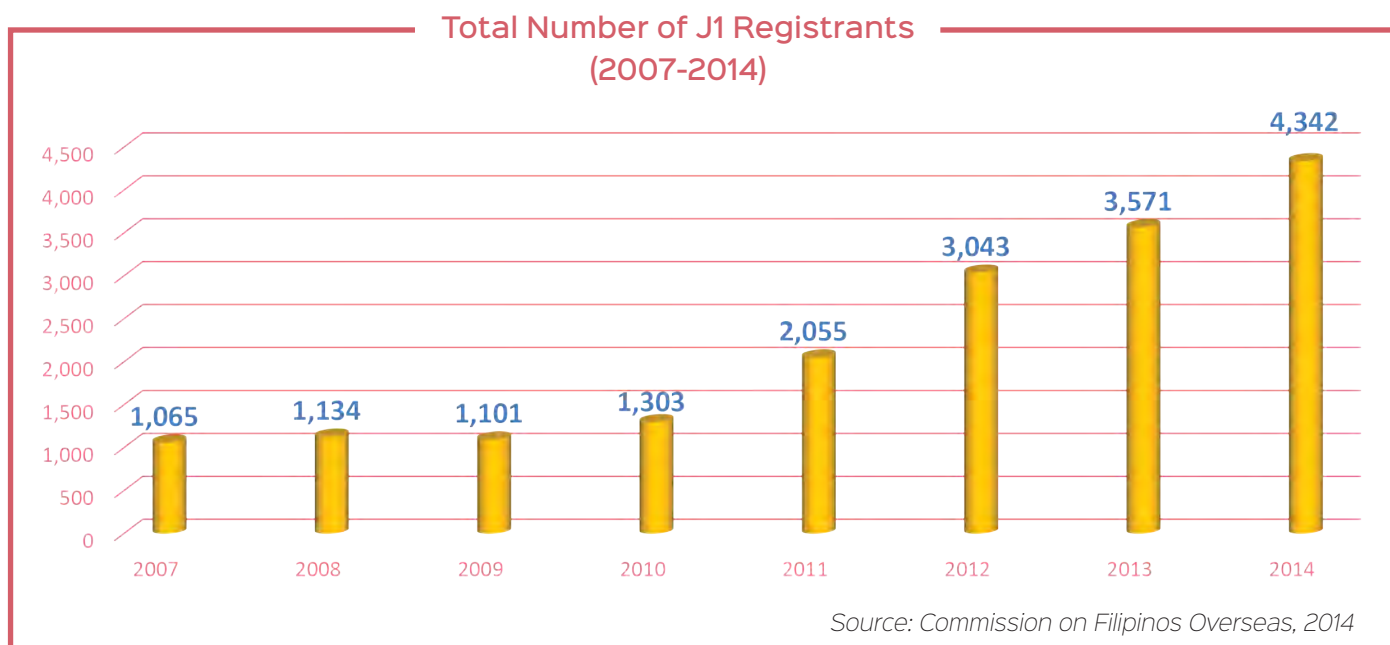
For the 1st semester 2015, P24,798.15 ETSP scholarship grant was turned over to the beneficiaries.

Exchange Visitor Program (EVP)

Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) refers to the international exchange administered by the United States to implement the Mutual and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961. It is a result of an agreement between the United States of America and Philippines to allow the exchange of their nationals for training in both countries. It aims to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges.

Filipinos leaving the country to participate in the EVP are required to register with the CFO. Part of its registration is the attendance to Pre-departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) to inform them about the conditions and responsibilities as a J1-visa holder as they are not expected to stay permanently in the US.

In 2014, CFO registered 4,342 EVP participants, and 5,441 in the 1st semester of 2015.



VIRTUAL SENTRO *Rizal*



Virtual Sentro Rizal

The “Virtual Sentro Rizal 2nd Edition” is a project of the CFO that brings the traditional mode of appreciating Filipino heritage into the digital age. It is a portable, multi-lingual collection of selected Filipiniana references in DVD format which were culled from the library collection of the National Commission for Culture & the Arts with additional materials sourced from cooperating producers and publishers.

This initiative is in compliance with Section XII of Republic Act No. 10066 – the National Cultural Heritage Law (2009) – which calls for the institutionalization of Sentro Rizal/s to serve as physical venues for the promotion of Philippine history, language, arts and culture in areas with significant numbers of overseas Filipinos. While the virtual nature of the collection allows cultural dissemination beyond borders and is purposely designed to appeal to the tech-savvy generation, this compilation is a modest attempt to introduce the Philippines via distance learning to Filipino and as well as foreign audiences.

The translation of the texts into Filipino, Ilocano, Sebwano, Bicolano, Meranaw, and Spanish provides a teaching/learning tool for culture educators that also promotes the use of the Filipino language and the development of the Mother Tongue-Based Multi-Lingual Education program. The translation of the texts of the “Virtual Sentro Rizal 2nd Edition” into Spanish was piloted to address the importance of cross-cultural understanding by making Philippine culture accessible to foreigners and especially to the growing number of transnational diaspora youth born to Filipino marriage migrants worldwide.

The 2nd Edition package also includes the multi-lingual Users’ Manual in printed format, the promotional Audio-Visual Presentation and the sample Lesson Plans.



CFO Information Systems Strategic Plan 2013- 2016

The CFO Information Systems Strategic Plan (ISSP) for 2013-2016 provides the roadmap to guide the agency's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) efforts for the next four (4) years. The plan confirms the critical role of Information and Communication Technology as an enabler of success for the CFO to achieve its new ten point goals in line with objectives of Philippine Development Plan for 2011 to 2016 and the Government Information Systems Plan (GISP).

Using "Migration and Development" as a framework, the CFO proposes an ICT operations support mechanism for 2013-2015 that will:

- Effectively facilitate communications with the CFO clientele worldwide
- Expedite the agency's administrative and other operational processes
- Provide the public convenient and speedy access to the agency's services and information
- Provide the President, Senate, Congress and other government policymakers and implementers adequate, up-to-date, and accurate information on the status of Filipino migration for sound and responsive policy formulation and for the design of specific interventions
- Provide reform initiatives in the agency's housekeeping functions that require the development of information systems that provide standards for agency level systems and a sound consolidation and monitoring facility at the oversight level

In 2014, the following information systems and websites were developed and enhanced:

1. Filipinos Overseas Information System (FOIS)
2. Guidance and Counseling Information System (GCIS)
3. EVP Online Pre-Registration Information System
4. Au Pair Information System
5. Presidential Awards Database System
6. Online Database of Filipino Nurses (Nurse / Nursing Organization Profile)
7. Philippine Schools Overseas (PSO) Information System
8. Time Monitoring System (TMS)
9. LINKAPIL Information System
10. Guidance and Counseling On-line Appointment System
11. Marriage Broker Information System
12. I.C.T. Support Information System (ICTSIS)
13. Client Feedback Information System
14. Ugnayan sa Nordic Region website (www.ugnayanno.cfo.gov.ph)
15. Ugnayan sa Roma website (www.ugnayanro.cfo.gov.ph)
16. Ugnayan sa Middle East Website (www.ugnayanme.cfo.gov.ph)
17. Third Global Summit of Filipinos in the Diaspora Website (www.3gs.cfo.gov.ph)
18. BaLinkBayan Online Portal Website (www.balinkbayan.gov.ph)

BaLinkBayan

The BaLinkBayan is the Overseas Filipinos' (OFs) one-stop online portal for diaspora engagement, offering an integrated and unique platform to re-engage with the Philippines through the D2D (Diaspora to Development) program of the Commission on Filipinos overseas with the support and help of several government agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Examples of the D2D programs that are part of the portal are: diaspora philanthropy, medical mission coordination, doing business in the Philippines, tourism initiatives and investment for overseas Filipinos.

A locally-funded national E-Government Project, the term BaLinkBayan is a play on the Filipino words *balikbayan* (returning migrant), *balik* (return), *bayan* (country) and the English word

“Link,” that refers to the world wide web. As a portal for diaspora engagement, it seeks to bring together 10.24 million Filipinos in the diaspora into an integrated and comprehensive platform that taps into their knowledge, expertise, skills, networks, material and financial resources to contribute to the development of the Philippines.

BaLinkBayan works at two levels; first, it links OFs to development oriented diaspora initiatives in the Philippines and second, it provides options for business and investment opportunities both at the national level and at their respective hometowns. The latter would link, among others, to automated transactional processes at the LGU level. Thus, in 2014, for the furtherance of its aims and purposes, BaLinkBayan concluded partnerships with different government agencies and other organizations such as National Poverty Commission, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, Land Registration Authority and National Youth Commission.



OTHER PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Inter-Agency Partnerships

In 2014, CFO established the following partnerships with various government and non-government agencies either by entering into an agreement and/or collaboration of relevant activities:

1. The Philippine Nurses Association of America, Inc. and Nursing Societies on *Balik Turo*.
2. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) on psychosocial counselling.
3. The Catholic Daegu University on Support to Filipino spouses of Koreans.
4. The Filipino Channel on the promotion of CFO's programs and services.
5. DOS1 for continuous operation of 1343 Actionline against human trafficking.
6. The University of San Carlos for partnership on migration research.



Technical and Secretariat Support to Inter-Agency Activities

CFO continued to strengthen its linkages with relevant agencies in the Philippines and host countries to enhance programs and services for Filipino migrants, and to ensure accessibility in addressing specific needs and interests.

In 2014, CFO provided technical assistance and secretariat support to the following inter-agency committees:

1. Board of Commissioners
2. Human Development and Poverty Reduction (HPDR) Cluster
3. Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative
4. Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) Project
5. Medium Term Information and Communications Technology Initiative (MITHI) Technical Working Group
6. EVP Committee
7. IACPSO
8. Migration and Integration Management Training Organization (MIMTO)
9. FAITH Task Force
10. NEDA Social Development Committee – Committee on International Migration and Development
11. Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking (IACAT)
12. Migration and Health Network
13. National Advisory Board Eura-Net Project
14. Remittance for Development Council (ReDC)
15. International Metropolis Steering Committee
16. Human Resource for Health Network
17. Medicare Portability Group
18. International Migration Statistics TWG
19. TWG on the revision of the Departure Guidelines for International Passengers
20. TWG on the drafting of Human Smuggling Bill
21. TWG on the Amendment of the RA 6955 or the Anti-Mail Order Bride Act
22. National Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (NALECC)
23. IAC-Month of Overseas Filipinos
24. ASEAN-Korean Migration Network

Aside from its regular programs and services, the CFO is also currently spearheading the following other programs/initiatives, in partnership with other government agencies and civil society organizations for the promotion of the interests and well-being of overseas Filipinos and their families:

Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking – Advocacy and Communications Committee (IACAT-ADVOCOM)

In December 2010, the CFO became an ex-officio member of the IACAT and was delegated to head the Advocacy and Communications Committee (ADVOCOM) because of its experience in handling the Presidential Task Force Against Human Trafficking (TFHT).

The creation of the IACAT-ADVOCOM is in line with one of the functions of the IACAT as stipulated in Section 21 (e) of RA 9208 which is to coordinate the conduct of massive information dissemination and campaign on the existence of the law and the various issues and problems attendant to trafficking through the local government units, concerned agencies, and NGOs. The Rule VIII, Article II, Section 132 of the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of the RA 9208, as amended by RA 10364, also stipulated that the ADVOCOM shall be primarily responsible for the development and implementation of the IACAT's communication program, and the conduct of research and study on the patterns and schemes of trafficking in persons for policy formulation and program direction.

Among its strategies is to engage and mobilize various stakeholders and target groups such as the national and local government agencies; civil society groups; media institutions; international organizations; foreign government agencies; migrant associations; and other non-government organizations.

In 2014, the following series of activities were conducted:

1. 4 Quarterly Meetings (March 21, June 17, Sept. 16, Nov. 14, 2014).

2. Meeting with the Institute of Multi- Cultural Studies of the Catholic University of Daegu, South Korea, CFO-Cebu, June 23, 2014.
3. Task Force Yolanda meeting, April 2014
4. Television interview with Bitag of Channel 5 on the issues of human trafficking in the guise of intermarriage.
5. Youth Jam held in Cebu City organized by MTV Exit on CFO and ADVOCOM programs
6. Radio interview with Laban Kontra Human Trafficking of DZAS on the issues of human trafficking and mail-order bride scheme.
7. Leadership Training Seminar for members of the Catholic Women's League (CWL) in the Diocese of Cubao on the issues of women and migration.
8. CSO Summit on Trafficking in Persons, Sarabia Manor Hotel and Convention Center, Iloilo City, October 09-10, 2014.
9. Forum organized by the Student Council Alliance of the Philippines (SCAP) at West Negros University, Iloilo on human trafficking and 1343 Actionline.
10. World Youth Alliance Regional Conference held in Manila on human trafficking.
11. Research study of the University of Southern California on the use of technology in the fight against human trafficking.
12. Anti-trafficking forum for barangay social workers of Sta. Rosa, Laguna.
13. Media forum on counter-trafficking in Iloilo City.
14. CFO organized the meetings of Polaris Project, an NGO operating the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) with the 1343 Action line case officers and call takers on August 5 – 7, 2014.

Modus Operandi Involving Illegal Recruitment of Filipinos Uncovered

Around 130 men and women from Manila, Ilocos, Abra and Bicol stood in front of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) on Friday, March 27, 2015 with the hope of working abroad. They were recruited through Facebook and promised work as dairy farm assistants, farm workers, nurses and healthcare workers in countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada and South Korea. The alleged illegal recruiter instructed the unknowing victims to pay a processing fee between P 130,000.00 - P215,000.00 through bank and personal transactions for the supposed paperwork necessary for overseas employment.

Afterwards, they were told to proceed to CFO Manila and attend the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS). The Commission is a government agency under the Office the President mandated to conduct PDOS to Filipinos holding immigrant/residence visas or those who will be settling permanently overseas.

Upon arrival of the numerous victims, CFO officers interviewed them and offered clarification on the government's process of deploying overseas Filipino workers (OFW), as well as assisted them in filing their complaints against their alleged perpetrator.

According to several accounts from the victims, they were told to go to the CFO and meet their fixer/illegal recruiter who would assist them in their attendance to the PDOS and processing of their working visas and other travel documents. Most of the victims were surprised that they have unsuspectingly been involved in illegal recruitment operations. Some of them shared that they have already received three days training in a canning factory based in Cavite as part of their "deployment" requirement. Upon inspection of their

official receipts for their payments made, it was discovered that said receipts were not BIR registered.

With the increasing number of Filipinos hoping to work abroad, the CFO encourages the public to verify the license and job orders of recruitment agencies with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) before filing applications or paying any fees.

The CFO also urges the public to be vigilant and active in the fight against human trafficking operations. To engage the public in this fight and make the government's services more accessible, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) launched the 1343 Actionline against Human Trafficking in March 2011. The Action line can be reached from any point in Metro Manila by dialing 1343 and is likewise accessible from the provinces using the Manila area code 02. Report can also be filed online through <http://1343actionline.ph/>.

The 1343 Actionline responds to inquiries, requests for assistance and reports of human trafficking and other related acts such as illegal recruitment, mail-order bride scheme, child trafficking, among others.

Laban kontra Human Trafficking, Laban nating Lahat! is the core message of an active campaign that IACAT carries out with various stakeholders from government and non-government organizations, women's groups and law enforcement agencies.

The 1343 Actionline Against Human Trafficking is being managed by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) as head of the Advocacy and Communications Committee (ADVOCOM) of the IACAT.



On July 2014, the 1343 Actionline has launched its **FREE** mobile application for Android and IOS.





"ITANONG MO KAY ATO!" Lawyers now Online!

In April 2015, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) through its Advocacy and Communications Committee (ADVOCOM) represented by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) partnered with the Office of the Legal Aid of the Arellano Law Foundation (ALF) to provide online legal counseling.

The two parties announced that this will be done through a web application, Itanong mo' kay Ato! and will also handle cases received through the 1343 Actionline against Human Trafficking. This 24/7 national hotline facility is dedicated to respond to reports of human trafficking and other related acts. It was operationalized in March 2011 under the supervision of CFO.

On 30 July 2015, in time for the observance of the World Day Against Trafficking, "Itanong mo' kay Ato!" became fully operational. It can be accessed through the official page of the 1343 Actionline against Human Trafficking or through the direct weblinks, namely: <http://www.1343actionline.ph>, or <http://onlinelegalcounseling.1343actionline.ph>, respectively.

Once accessed, the public has the options to avail of the live chat or send a message to the partner lawyers. Messages or live inquiries, whether coming here from the Philippines or outside the country, can be responded to by the partner lawyers on a 24/7 basis through their personal computers and smartphones. All information received through chatting or e-mails will be held with utmost confidence.

In the span of three (3) months, the partnership between CFO and ALF has resulted in the conduct of paralegal training for the case officers of 1343 Actionline and the handling of five (5) cases involving child trafficking, illegal recruitment and mail-order bride scheme. In addition, the partnership has transformed law interns of ALF into anti-trafficking advocates.

Itanong mo' kay Ato! aims to directly provide online legal opinion, a means to reach out to Filipinos who cannot afford legal consultation, and an avenue to further reinforce the fight

against human trafficking, illegal recruitment, mail-order bride scheme, organ trafficking, and other related acts.

In the Trafficking in Persons Report for 2015 by the US Department of State, the Philippines has retained its Tier 2 ranking in its efforts in the fight against human trafficking. The said report cited the country's increased law enforcement efforts, anti-trafficking interventions on disaster-affected areas, continued robust efforts of its prevention programs, among others.

With the recent approval of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Republic Act 9208 as amended by the Republic Act 10364, the IACAT calls for its full implementation. The CFO as the lead agency of the IACAT-ADVOCOM would further enhance cooperation and partnership with various sectors through the Private-Public Partnership agenda of the government which is also in line with the Council's core message, "*Laban Kontra Human Trafficking, Laban Nating Lahat*".

1343 Actionline against Human Trafficking

To make the government services more accessible to the public, the IACAT through its ADVOCOM launched the 1343 Actionline Against Human Trafficking on 15 March 2011. It is a 24/7 hotline facility that responds to emergency or crisis calls from victims of human trafficking and their families. The 1343 Actionline likewise provides a venue for the public to be engaged in the fight against trafficking in persons. Its creation is also in line with the core message of the IACAT which is, *Laban kontra Human Trafficking, Laban nating Lahat*.

As an expansion of the service of the 1343 Actionline, accessibility through text messaging/short messaging services (SMS), on-line through e-mail and its official website www.1343actionline.ph, social media networks, mobile applications and international hotlines were developed as alternative reporting vehicles.

On July 2014, the 1343 Actionline has launched its FREE mobile application for Android and IOS mobile phone users.

There were 76 actual cases reported thru the 1343 Actionline. 33 are directly related to human trafficking, 14 are illegal recruitment, 1 mail order bride and 28 are linked to domestic violence, passport irregularities, and reports of missing persons.

To further improve its institutional and human capacities to fight trafficking in persons, CFO undertook the following activities and initiatives:

- Regular attendance and active participation at meetings of IACAT
- Close monitoring of laws, regulations, institutions and mechanisms which support and complement the government's fight against human trafficking.
- Maintenance of close working relationships with international organizations and civil society organizations, including Filipino associations and organizations abroad to intensify information awareness to combat human trafficking.

Financial Literacy Program

As part of its core mission to assist migrants and their families in preparing for life abroad, the CFO developed and conducts the “Kalamang Pinansyal Tungo Sa Kaunlaran” or “KAPIT KA!” Financial Literacy Program. Activities under the program include lectures and workshops that aim to educate the migrants and other participants on proper management of their finances through savings, budgeting, financial planning and investments. The KAPIT KA! training module covers the following topics:

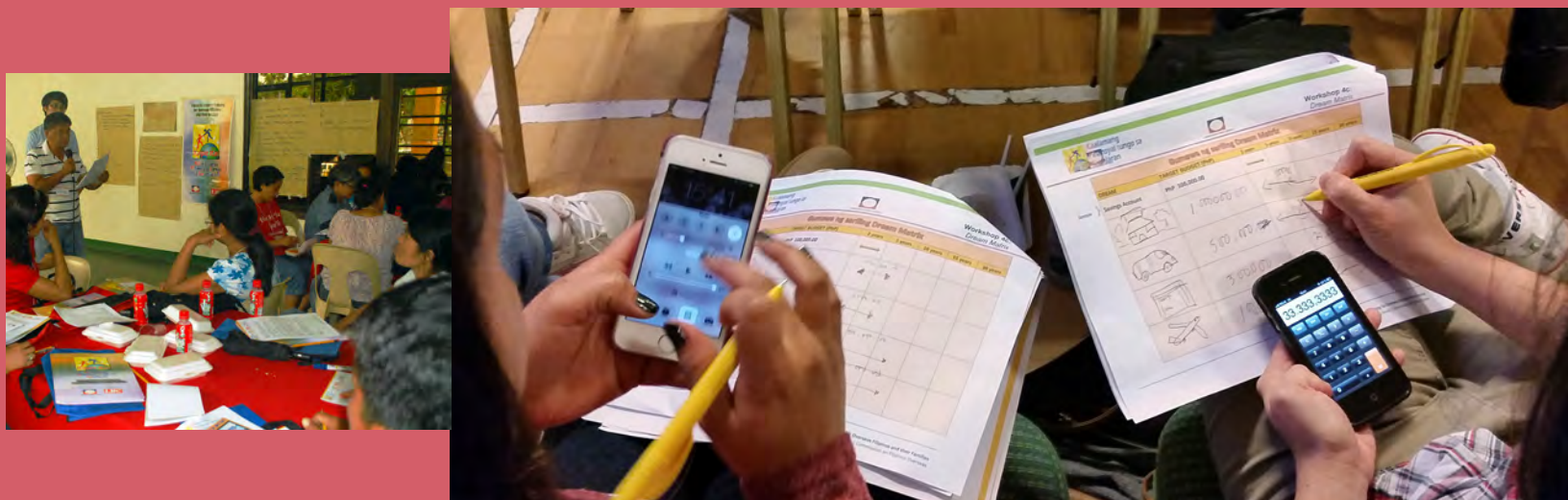
- Knowing your Financial Standing
- The Right Formula of Saving
- Financial Fitness Quiz
- Preparation of Personal Income and Expense Tracker (PIET)
- Prioritizing your Expenses
- 10 Commandments to be Financially Literate
- Preparing your Dream Matrix
- Oath of Financial Literacy

Through this program, CFO seeks to provide migrants and their families with tools to enhance

their financial standing and guide them towards reaching their financial goals.

In 2014, eight (8) financial literacy campaigns were conducted with the following details:

1. St. John Neumann Migrants Center – Baclaran, March 3, 2014
2. Clark International Airport, October 26 – 27 2014
3. Philippine School Doha, October 28, 2014
4. St. Mary's Missionaries, Rome, Italy, November 30, 2014
5. Philippine Embassy in Oslo attended by 41 migrants, Nov. 19, 2014
6. Landakot Church in Reykjavik, Iceland attended by 32 migrants, Nov. 21, 2014
7. St. Anne's Church, Denmark attended by 47 migrants, Nov. 23 2014
8. Stockholm, Sweden attended by 32 migrants, Nov. 26, 2014.



PESO SENSE – The Philippine Financial Freedom Campaign

Peso Sense is a nation-wide Financial Literacy campaign funded by the Western Union Foundation, e-Business Inc. and Petnet Inc. It is designed to encourage improving productive expenditure, improve the capacity for saving and promote entrepreneurship among Filipino beneficiaries of international or domestic remittances. It is implemented by the CFO and overseen by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

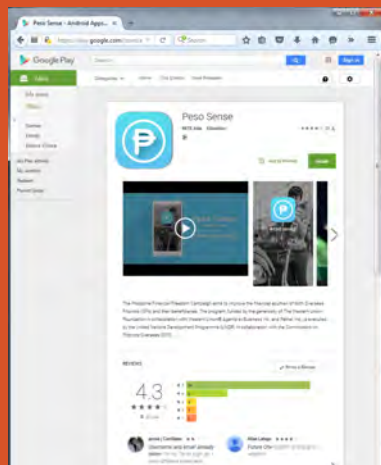
Peso-Sense utilized multi-channels to cascade, information to Filipinos worldwide such as print materials, website, video and social

media. In particular, Peso Sense facebook page was launched on February 2014 with 3,337 likers until December 2014 and reached 51, 627 for the 1st semester of 2015. The top 10 countries of destination of overseas Filipinos who interactively engaged in the Peso-Sense Facebook page include United Arab Emirate; Saudi Arabia; Hong Kong; Singapore; Taiwan; United States of America; Japan; Qatar; Kuwait; and Canada.



PESO Sense Launches New App for Overseas Filipinos

The mobile app will allow overseas Filipinos to directly pay and monitor household expenses of their families in the Philippines



PESO Sense has launched a mobile application to help overseas Filipinos and their beneficiaries maximize their entrepreneurial potentials. A press statement on the launch on Friday, August 28, described PESO Sense Mobile Application as a "free platform for selling and marketing local products in the Philippines" in and out of the country.

The mobile app, which can be downloaded on the Google Playstore for Android phones and will be available for iOS users by early October, will also allow overseas Filipinos to directly pay and monitor household expenses of their families in the Philippines.

"Remittances, having great geographical dispersion in private, public and capital flows, can simulate development in areas that are lagging economic development," said Titon Mitra, country director of UNDP Philippines. "But the huge potential of remittances is very much constrained by one key factor: financial illiteracy," Mitra added.

The PESO Sense campaign was created in 2013 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), and is funded by The Western Union Foundation. Also known as The Philippine Financial Freedom Campaign, it aims to improve financial literacy of overseas Filipino workers. Mitra said the UNDP wants to affect behavioral change among the senders and recipients of remittances – from being spenders to being "savers and savvy investors." The mobile app will include several features to help OFWs and their beneficiaries achieve this.

Mobile app features

PESO Sense Store will allow entrepreneurs to market their products to consumers at home and abroad, while PESO Sense Bills will allow users to directly pay household utilities, medical and tuition fees in selected schools and hospitals nationwide.

Payments to the Social Security System, PhilHealth, Pag-ibig Fund and National Bureau of Investigation can also be made on the app. Users can also read free financial and entrepreneurial trips, trivia and articles based on their personal profile through the PESO Sense News Feeds, as well as track, record, and monitor the remittances they send back to their families through the PESO Sense Remittance Diary.

Financial literacy

"We find it fitting and proper to launch a mobile application that we hope could make a difference not only in the lives of our overseas Filipinos but also for the families they have left behind," said Secretary and CFO Chairperson Imelda Nicolas.

In the first 4 months of 2015, personal remittances totaled \$8.6 billion, said Nicolas, citing the latest data from Banko Sentral ng Pilipinas. This is 51% higher than the level recorded in the same period last year, she added.

"We can certainly celebrate the fact that in the Philippines, remittances equal approximately 10% of the GDP," said Mitra. "But if this wealth is not effectively utilized, we really are underexploiting the constitution remittances available to people's prosperity in and out of the country."

With the launch of the PESO Sense app, the CFO, UNDP, and Western Union hope to reach a wider audience and thus expand financial literacy. "Being financially literate is not just about saving," Patricia Riingen, senior vice president for East and South Asia at Western Union, said at the launch's closing remarks. "It means making the most out of your money, inspiring individual innovation, and entrepreneurship." – Rappler.com

Source:
<http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/balikbayan/104130-peso-sense-launch-ofws>

Joint Migration Development Initiative Phase II (JMDI II)

The Joint Migration and Development Initiative Phase II is a global program supported by the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It is implemented in eight countries by the United Nations Development Programme and its partners, International Organization for Migration, International Labour Organization, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Population Fund and UN Women.

It aims to strengthen and reinforce the role of migration for development by upscaling and institutionalizing local migration and development (M&D) initiatives.

As it was in line with CFO's mission of promoting and mainstreaming policies, programs, and projects with migration and development as its framework, UNDP Philippines has designated CFO as the national government agency partner for the JMDI II. CFO is working with the City Government of Naga City and NEDA IVA and their respective project partners in the implementation of the JMDI Bicol and Strengthening, Upscaling and Mainstreaming International Migration and Development (SUMMID) in Calabarzon projects.

A. JMDI Bicol

The JMDI Bicol project entitled "Mainstreaming migration and development in the governance of local authorities in Bicol Region" led by the City Government of Naga (CGN), is in partnership with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), Ateneo de Naga University (AdNU) Center for Local Governance, Associates in Research and Community Education Services, and the regional offices of the Department of the Interior and Local Government and National Economic and Development Authority.

The project aims to localize, mainstream and modernize M&D issues and projects among key provinces, cities and municipalities in the Bicol Region.

In particular, following activities were conducted in 2014: Regional Forum on Migration and Development for Bicol Region, Villa Caceres Hotel, Naga City, 21-22 April 2014

1. Advocacy visits to 10 Bicol LGUs on migration and development training course, 1-4 September 2014;
2. Regional Forum on Migration and Development for Western Visayas, Amigo Terraces Hotel, Iloilo City, 24-25 September 2014;

3. Training on Mainstreaming Migration and Development in Local Development Plans and Investment Program, Sorsogon Paradise Resort, Sorsogon City, September 29-October 1, 2014;
4. Training on Mainstreaming Migration and Development in Local Plans and Investment Programs, Smallville 21 Hotel, Iloilo City, 26-28 November 2014;
5. BLoG-MD Writeshop on Development of Training Modules on Migration and Development Mainstreaming, Institution Building, and Programs and Services Development – 29 May, Albay
6. Migration and Development Forum, AVR Provincial Capitol, Lucena City, 2 December 2014;

The conduct of Bicol Regional Forum on Migration and Development resulted to the signing of covenant by Bicol local government units in supporting the project and M&D initiatives. Advocating to the Regional Development Council's Social Development Committee in creating a regional committee on M&D and including a more comprehensive M&D provisions in the Regional Development Plan.





B. SUMMID Calabarzon

SUMMID Calabarzon aims to strengthen, upscale and mainstream migration into local development plans through inclusive and sustainable programs that will minimize social cost and maximize the gains of overseas migration.

There were 3 established Provincial Migration Resource Centers in 3 out of 5 provinces, in Batangas, Cavite and Laguna.

In 2014, following activities were held in Calabarzon:

1. Training of Trainers on Financial Literacy, Tan Ville Garden Resort, Rosario, Batangas, 24-26 September 2014;
2. Training on Strengthening and Building Local Migration and Development Institutions, Rendezvous Hotel and Restaurant, Masbate City, 12-14 November 2014;
3. Migration and Development Forum, AVR Provincial Capitol, Lucena City, 2 December 2014.





Based on an EU document on “Improving the International Migration Management System of the Philippines” dated 2011, it was noted that “in the strongly decentralized governance context, the role of the Local Government Units (LGUs) is critical but has largely been ignored in the migration field until now....It must be recognized at the outset that despite being at the forefront of migration management, LGUs have low awareness of and capacity related to migration and development.”

implementing the Migration and Development Initiative (MDI) for Western Visayas and Ilocos Region.

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A. Western Visayas (MDI-WV)



MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE WESTERN VISAYAS

Towards the end of 2013, Western Visayas was devastated by Typhoon Yolanda, displacing 515,071 families in the region accounting for 56% of the 918,261 displaced families across the country. The devastation caused by Typhoon Yolanda also resulted in around Php600 million in damages and losses to economic sector of the region especially in the Panay Island.

Despite the devastation in the region, NEDA Regional Office VI expressed an interest in developing a migration and development project that would upscale existing M&D initiatives in the region. With \$22 billion in remittances according to World Bank in 2012 and Western Visayas as one of the top 5 regions of origin of overseas Filipinos, the time was ripe for international migration to be linked with regional and local development in Western Visayas along with its efforts on disaster risk reduction and management.

In June 27, 2014, Regional Development Council (RDC) VI approved the implementation of the Migration and Development Initiative for Western Visayas (MDI-WV), signifying readiness to upscale M&D initiative at the regional level. Since the approval of the MDI-WV project, NEDA VI, in behalf of RDC VI, has been

working with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and project partners for the implementation of project activities, namely, the Western Visayas Regional Forum on Migration and Development, Project Launch of the MDI-WV project during the 3rd quarter regular RDC VI meeting on September 26, 2014, and the conduct of the first in a 4-part M&D training series on Mainstreaming Migration and Development in Local Plans and Investment Programs on November 26-28, 2014.

In a follow-up M&D advocacy visit to the 6 provinces of Western Visayas on November 2014, representatives from CFO and NEDA VI were able to meet and secure the support and buy-in of the governors from Guimaras, Iloilo, Capiz and Negros Occidental, indicating raised awareness, participation, and local initiatives on M&D. They were also able to generate support from the Local Chief Executives of Aklan and Antique through their designated representatives who signified support in their behalf. LGUs who participated in the regional forum also had very concrete outputs to showcase during the November 26-28, 2014 training with budget allocation for M&D activities and PPAs on policies, projects and activities of the LGUs for 2015 on M&D.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (MDI) IN WESTERN VISAYAS

"Building a Better and Stronger Western Visayas"

DONATE • HELP • SUPPORT

Your US\$ 5.00 could help raise the amount needed in changing their lives.

BANGON WESTERN VISAYAS
REBUILD A BETTER & STRONGER WESTERN VISAYAS

Tubig: Manggad kad kabuhi (Water: Wealth and Life)
This project in Island Barangay of Bito-on in Iloilo hopes for the reconstruction of the drinking water system that was totally damaged by Yolanda.

Suyac Ecopark
The initiative will pave the way for the rehabilitation of mangroves and reconstruction of the eco-tourism park in Suyac Island in Negros Occidental that was directly hit by Yolanda.

REBUILD Project Sustainable Livelihood Project
A cooperative with a common service facility will be completed to help fisher folks and farmers in Iloilo affected by Yolanda to have a sustainable livelihood.

Let us "Build a Better and Stronger Western Visayas."

Almost three years since the onslaught of super typhoon Yolanda left the country with homelessness and human despair, many of our Kababayan in Western Visayas are still struggling to get back to their feet. In addition, unfortunately each year, the Philippines becomes more and more vulnerable to natural disasters.

In response to the call of "Building a Better and Stronger Western Visayas", the Bangon Western Visayas is being launched to maximize the important role of various stakeholders, including overseas Filipinos. The project aims to pool support to local development initiatives, specifically in disaster risk-reduction and mitigation activities in disaster-prone areas of Western Visayas.

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas of the Office of the President of the Philippines is the

national government implementing agency in the comprehensive project of mainstreaming migration and development at the local level (city, town, province and region) called "Joint Migration Development Initiative", Phase 2 (JMDI2).

The three risk-reduction and mitigation projects identified in the region are already in the pipeline, namely:

• **Tubig: Manggad kad kabuhi (Water: Wealth and Life)**

This project in Island Barangay of Bito-on in Iloilo hopes for the reconstruction of the drinking water system that was totally damaged by Yolanda.

• **REBUILD Project: Convergence for Sustainable Livelihood Project**

Through partnership with various stakeholders, a cooperative with

a common service facility will be completed to help fisher folks and farmers in Iloilo affected by Yolanda to have a sustainable livelihood.

• **Suyac Ecopark**

The initiative will pave the way for the rehabilitation of mangroves and reconstruction of the eco-tourism park in Suyac Island in Negros that was directly hit by Yolanda.

We are appealing for your support in raising the amount needed in the completion of the above mentioned projects, with a minimum of US\$ 5 (US five dollars). For more details, you may log on to the www.bangonwesternvisayas.com.

Together let us "Build a Better and Stronger Western Visayas."

For more details, you may visit www.bangonwesternvisayas.com or email the Commission on Filipinos Overseas: Director Marie del Rosario-Apud and Mr. Geronico Herrera at maledr12@yahoo.com and gherrera@cfo.gov.ph.

CFO Conducts 1st Regional Training on M&D in Ilocos Region

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) and the National Economic and Development Authority – Region I in partnership with the Western Union Foundation and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) launched the first leg of the capacity building training on Migration and Development (M&D) in Local Governance in Region 1 (Ilocos Region) on June 3-5, 2015. Historically, Ilocos Region is known as the place where large-scale migration of Filipinos originated.

The three-day training, entitled Mainstreaming M&D in Local Plans and Investment Programs, took place at Hotel Ariana, Bauang, La Union where representatives from 4 LGU provinces (Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Pangasinan), 3 LGU cities (Dagupan, Laoag, and Urdaneta), 5 regional government agencies, and 4 civil societies convene. This initiative was also supported by Regional Director Nestor Rillon of NEDA – Region 1 and Director Grace Ursua of DOLE – Region 1 who set the stage of the M&D discussion with their opening remarks.

Through the cooperation of these stakeholders, the training sought to enable the Local Government Units (LGUs) of the Ilocos Region to mainstream Migration and Development (M&D) into their local plans and investment programs. Focusing towards this objective, 6 plenary sessions and 3 workshops were facilitated.

For the plenary sessions, 5 speakers, including Rex Verona of Migrant Forum Asia and APL Sentro, Atty. Golda Roma of UNDP, Wilfredo Priles of City Government of Naga, Rodrigo Garcia Jr. and Andrea Anolin of CFO, shared their knowledge and expertise on the intricacies of and tips in the successful mainstreaming of M&D. Each session was concluded through an open forum where a platform was created

for valuable exchange of experiences and insights between the participants and the resource persons.

Additionally, the workshops provided a path for the LGUs to design the basic framework of their M&D programs which will be implemented in their respective provinces or cities. The workshop outputs and presentations served as mechanism for participants to share their best practices, set their vision, and build and strengthen their plans, programs, and multi-stakeholder M&D structures.

To further initiate and sustain the implementation of the workshop outputs, the Resolution Adopting the Workshop Outputs of the Training on Migration and Development (M&D) in Local Governance: Mainstreaming M&D in Local Plans and Investment Programs was signed by each representative, which also sealed the end of the three-day training program.



B. Ilocos Region



Region 1 has been at the forefront of Philippine international migration history with the deployment of the earliest batch of Filipinos for overseas work in the early 1900s. Since then, migration corridors have been carved from provinces in the region to major destinations especially in North America.

The existence of M&D initiatives in all four provinces of Region I provides the fertile ground for these initiatives to be fully mainstreamed in regional and provincial development and investment plans, institutionalized through M&D structures at the regional and provincial levels or through migration resource centers, and up-scaling of these initiatives at the regional level.

Thus on June 3-5, 2015, the CFO and the National Economic and Development Authority – Region 1 in partnership with the Western Union Foundation and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) launched the first leg of the capacity building training on Migration and Development (M&D) in Local Governance in Region 1 (Ilocos Region).

The three-day training, entitled Mainstreaming M&D in Local Plans and Investment Programs was attended by representatives from 4 LGU provinces (Ilocos

Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Pangasinan), 3 LGU cities (Dagupan, Laoag, and Urdaneta), 5 regional government agencies, and 4 civil societies convene.

Through the cooperation of these stakeholders, the training sought to enable the Local Government Units (LGUs) of the Ilocos Region to mainstream Migration and Development (M&D) into their local plans and investment programs through workshops.

The workshop outputs and presentations served as mechanism for participants to share their best practices, set their vision, and build and strengthen their plans, programs, and multi-stakeholder M&D structures.

To further initiate and sustain the implementation of the workshop outputs, the Resolution Adopting the Workshop Outputs of the Training on Migration and Development (M&D) in Local Governance: Mainstreaming M&D in Local Plans and Investment Programs was signed by each representative.

With the success of the first part of MDI-1, the CFO implemented its second capacity building training that focused on financial literacy and investment opportunities, in August 2015.

Recognition of Overseas Filipinos

Recognizing the achievements, excellence and philanthropy of overseas Filipinos, the Philippine government honors them for their sacrifices and dedication to their work, family and the nation through the following programs:

A. Month of Overseas Filipinos

In 1988, Proclamation No. 276 declared December of every year as “Month of Overseas Filipinos”. Special projects and activities to give recognition to Filipinos abroad and to encourage their participation in development activities in the country are undertaken every December in observance of this occasion, organized by the Inter- Agency Committee (IAC) co-chaired by CFO.

In recognition of the significant role of the media in the promotion and advocacy of migration and development, the Migration Advocacy and Media (MAM) Awards was conceived in 2011 by the CFO. The MAM Awards recognize the positive and significant contributions of media outlets, institutions and practitioners in the fields of print, radio, movie and television, advertising and internet from the government and private media organizations in the Philippines and abroad, in raising public awareness on issues on Filipino migration, advocating the cause of Filipinos overseas, and promoting a positive image of Filipinos overseas, and migration and development.

In 2014, in its 4th year, the MAM awards recognized 10 best media works from the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and the Philippines.



Aquino confers awards on 33 outstanding Pinoys



President Aquino listens as Lea Salonga performs during the 2014 Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas ceremony at Malacañang yesterday. WILLY PEREZ

World-class singer and Broadway actress Lea Salonga was among 33 gifted and talented Filipinos and organizations who have made a significant mark in the international community, and were thus conferred awards by President Aquino.

"You have come a very long way in your 21 years," he told Salonga before he delivered his speech yesterday at the Rizal Hall in Malacañang Palace. Upon learning that she will perform, Aquino felt they were very "fortunate."

"Who wouldn't want to hear Lea sing?" he asked. Salonga sang "Tagumpay nating Lahat" before the crowd of her fellow recipients for the 2014 Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas. Aquino was introduced by Secretary Imelda Nicolas of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas.

Among the other fellow 20 Pamana ng Pilipino awardees were composer Robert Lopez of Walt Disney's hit song "Frozen," and investigative journalist Sheila Coronel, now dean of the Columbia University in New York. Coronel was represented by her sister Miriam Ferrer, the government's chief negotiator with the Muslim rebels.

Other awardees:

World-renowned classical musician Cecile Licad, dubbed as the "pianist's pianist"; Cristeta Comerford, the first Asian and woman executive chef of the US White House; United Arab Emirates-based fashion designer Michael Cinco.

Jasmine Lee, the first Filipina and foreign-born citizen to be elected in the National Assembly of South Korea; William Dar, a champion of horticulture and first Filipino to serve as director general of International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics in India.

Katherine Luzuriaga, a pediatric immunologist who was part of the team that cured an infant with HIV in the US; Paolo Antonio Silva, an ophthalmologist who made pioneering contributions in retina research in the US.

Roderick de la Cruz, a southern California Edison senior engineer who shares his expertise in the field of dam safety to the Philippines; Kristoffer Colla, founder of MicroPact, a leading IT company in the US.

Baldomero Olivera, a chemist and distinguished biology professor at the University of Utah; Marianito Asperilla, an infectious disease specialist who introduced the multi-county bioterrorism response group to deal with the threat of bioterrorism in the US.

Filomenita Hoegsholm, a gender equality advocate in Europe and one of the founders of the Babaylan-Denmark, a non-profit organization that works on political, cultural-educational and social causes to improve the

situation of Filipinas in Denmark. Jonathan Irabagon, an award-winning saxophonist who was named one of the New York City jazz icons; Sheila Lirio-Marcelo, founder of Care.com, one of the largest online care services in the US, and advocate of women empowerment.

Alfredo Rocas, versatile artist, anthropologist, historian, essayist and photographer based in Australia; Lolita Valderama-Savage, a painter whose works were exhibited in the US, Europe and Asia; and internationally acclaimed painter Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi in France.

Four organizations were also conferred as Kaanib ng Bayan who were feted for their significant contribution to Philippine society.

These were the Israel-based American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the world's leading Jewish humanitarian assistance organization, and who also donated funds to victims of super typhoon Yolanda in November 2013.

Wako Asato, a Japanese expert in the field of Philippine migration research, who extended scholarship grants to underprivileged college students in central Visayas.

Humana Child Aid Society in the US, an independent NGO operating in plantation schools in remote areas, catering to the basic educational needs of thousands of stateless children, many of them of Filipino ancestry.

Dominiek Segaert, a Belgian educator who initiated fundraising activities for the improvement of the quality of secondary education in Davao de Sur.

There was also a lone Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (Linkapil) awardee in the person of Serenata in Saudi Arabia, a children's choir and string chamber orchestra that supports the education of less fortunate students in the Philippines.

There were also eight Banaag awardees, among them the Daegu Filipino Community Council in South Korea, a non-profit organization that promotes the welfare of Filipino migrants in Daegu.

United Kingdom-based Danilo Favor, a registered nurse and the first elected Filipino councilor in East Grinstead, who initiated several health-related charitable programs that have benefited the Filipino community.

Institute of Integrated Electrical Engineers Central Region Chapter in Saudi Arabia, a professional organization committed in the development of Filipino migrant electrical engineers in Saudi Arabia.

Rosa Angelica Libron in South Korea, a nun who was instrumental in the establishment of Filipino-Korean community in Guri City, and provides assistance to distressed OFWs in South Korea.

Augusto Mercado, a founder of wireless engineering business enterprise Datalogix and a community leader in Texas who assists distressed overseas Filipino workers.

Migrant Heritage Commission, a non-profit service oriented organization providing pro-bono services in protecting and advancing human rights of migrants and their families in the US.

Victoria Navarro, a former president of the Philippine Nurses Association of America who has always been supportive of Filipino nurses there.

Anita Sasaki in Japan, a Filipino community leader who established 'Tahanan ni Nanay,' a halfway house for overseas Filipino workers in distress and a learning center for Filipino-Japanese children.

Written by Delon Porcalla
(The Philippine Star) | Updated December 6, 2014

B. Presidential Awards for Filipinos Individuals and Organizations Overseas

The Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas, established through Executive Order No. 498 in December 1991, is a biennial award conferred to distinguished Filipino individuals and organizations in recognition of their outstanding contributions to national development efforts, or their outstanding achievements in their field of profession. The awards, implemented and managed by CFO, are also conferred to foreign individuals and organizations that provide assistance to the country or advance the cause of Filipino communities overseas.

The Presidential Awards has four categories – Kaanib ng Bayan Award, Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award, Banaag Award, and Pamana ng Pilipino Award.

In 2014, 33 outstanding overseas Filipino individuals and foreign-based organizations from 13 countries were conferred with the Presidential Awards by His Excellency President Benigno S. Aquino III. Thereby, totaling to 435 Presidential awardees from 49 countries since 1991, who were thoroughly screened by three different committees with representatives from the government, civil society, media, academe, religious and business sectors, and finally the President of the Philippines.





Global Summit of Filipinos in the Diaspora

The Global Summit of Filipinos in the Diaspora is a biennial CFO activity which aims to highlight best practices of diaspora engagement since the launch of the Diaspora to Development (D2D) flagship program in September 2011.

The Summit serves as one of the biggest convergence of community leaders of Philippine associations worldwide. It gathers participants including previous Presidential awardees, leaders and convenors of the Global Filipino Diaspora Council (GFDC), US Pinoys for Good Governance (USP4GG) and other global Filipino networks, representatives from migration-related Philippine government agencies, civil society organizations, academe, private sector and multi-lateral agencies.

The CFO intends to institutionalize and maximize overseas Filipinos (OFs) involvement in the socio-cultural and economic development of the Philippines through ten (10) major areas of interventions including skills and technology transfer, arts and culture exchange, educational exchange, business linkages, diaspora investments, global legal assistance, advocacy and return and integration. The Summit also hopes to strengthen networking among OFs in the different regions of the world and accelerate participation of second- and third generation OFs in the country's development initiatives.

The First Global Summit in the Philippines was an unprecedented continent-wide dialogue on the Filipino migrant community's concerns and desire

to help in the development both of their host and home countries. It provided a framework for Filipino communities to interact and work with multi-sectoral sectors of both host and home countries in addressing issues, encouraging participation, empowering migrants and strengthening the Filipino diaspora's capacity to integrate with the host country and re-engage with the Motherland. And, in keeping with its commitment, the First Conference of Filipinos in Europe was conducted in Rome, Italy on September 2012.

The 2nd Global Summit was again successfully conducted on February 26-27, 2013 at the Dusit Thani Manila with the theme, "Two Years Thereafter: The Best of the Philippine Diaspora" and the tagline "Balikbayanihan para sa Inang Bayan." There were 600 participants from eight regions of the world.

On 2014, CFO partnered with different stakeholders, from different government and non-government agencies, and diaspora organizations such as Global Filipino Diaspora Council (GFDC), European Network of Filipino Diaspora (ENFiD), US Pinoys for Good Governance (USP4GG), and the Middle East Network of Filipino Diaspora (MENFiD) in the preparation of the 3rd Global Summit of Filipinos in the Diaspora which was held on February 25 – 27, 2015. Its theme was "Vision and Action for the Filipino Diaspora 2015 and Beyond" and the tagline "*Sumali at makibahagi sapagbabalik ng mga bayani! Ang kakayahan at kaalaman, ibalik sa bayan! Magbalik-bayanihan tayo!*"



Youth Leaders Engage in Charity Giving for Tagbanua Children



YouLead participants took a pose with Ms. Yanika Seratubias, speaker from PIGLAS, Palawan during the orientation.



The Underground River experience of YouLead participants together with the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) team.



The participants walked for almost an hour to donate the books to Tagbanua children of Brgy. Cabayugan, Puerto Princesa, Palawan.



Eleven Overseas Filipino youth from Philippine School Doha (PSD) and International Philippine School in Shanghai (IPSS) joined the Youth Leaders in the Diaspora (YouLead) Experience held in Puerto Princesa, Palawan last May 13-15, 2015.

This event, spearheaded by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), focuses on the rich history and natural wonders of Palawan and its transformation into being hubs of industries and progress as a result of migration and development. Participants are expected to learn and inculcate the core values of Filipino youth leaders such as deep appreciation of Filipino identity, good governance and leadership skills, sense of volunteerism and social responsibility and active role in diaspora development.

With the theme **"YouLeadD5.0: #IbaAko"**, the event served as an avenue to encourage the overseas Youth Leaders in engaging in philanthropic initiatives in the country and become the future of Philippine Diaspora.

The participants went to the famous Puerto Princesa Underground River, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature. They also visited Palawan Rescue and Wildlife Centre, Mitra's Ranch, Baker's Hill, and experienced the mangrove paddle boating and firefly watching. The participants also enjoyed the island hopping on the third day.

As the highlight of this year's YouLeadD event, the participants visited one indigenous community in Brgy. Cabayugan, Puerto Princesa, Palawan called "Tagbanua". They tirelessly trekked the mountainous part of Puerto Princesa for more than an hour in order to give the books to elementary students of Cabayugan Elementary School-Extension.

During the book donation, the YouLead participants were welcomed warmly by Tribal Leader, Mr. Rodolfo F. Rodrigo, School Adviser Ms. Sosima Rodrigo, parents, and students. They were very grateful to the participants and to the CFO for choosing them as the beneficiary of the book donation given by the C&E Publishing Foundation.

In the plenary session the next day, Mr. Ellric Joseph T. Maglangit, a YouLead participant from IPSS shared his experience about the YouLead event and said: *"I fell to the delusion that Philippines was full of criminals. But today, my fellow youth leaders from the Commission on Filipinos Overseas taught me the wonders of the Philippines and it is truly more fun in the Philippines. In Shanghai, China, I was raised with the gifts of life. I do not know how lucky I am until yesterday, we went to a poor barangay up to the mountains, and we walked for 30 minutes going to the school just to give books. And even in the road, you will see some carabao feces. It was also very rocky and muddy. Their only means of transportation is carabao. They also told me that each student would walk that way every morning just to go to school. And now I only know how lucky I am to be right where I am."*

The three-day activity was a memorable and meaningful experience because the participants were able to learn their culture and heritage and at the same time go back to the country and be an instrument of change and development.

Ugnayan Series

Ugnayan is a series of gatherings/meetings with Filipino community / organization leaders in various regions of the world to discuss means of cooperation for diaspora engagement. Ugnayan aims the engagement of OFs to familiarize them about CFO's programs. It also intends to empower OFs by promoting CFO's financial freedom campaign, establishment of support network and intensifying their participation in the government's campaign against human trafficking.

With this project, networking among the Filipino community organizations can also be instrumental in encouraging diaspora philanthropic activities in support of Philippine development. It also complements efforts to encourage OFs to exercise their right of suffrage while overseas and avail of financial literacy trainings.

In 2014, the Ugnayan series was conducted in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Italy, and Middle East. Its immediate output, are the following:

1. Updated directory of community associations in the Middle East, Rome, Nordic countries, Europe and Asia pacific regions;
2. Strengthened networks of Filipino associations in the Middle East, Europe, Nordic countries, Europe and Asia pacific regions;
3. Commitment among participants to be involved and help sustain programs and activities for migrants organized by the Diplomatic Posts and the CFO, and vice versa;
4. Application of the lessons learned from the Philippine Financial Freedom Campaign – PESO Sense;
5. Increased number of registered and voting overseas Filipinos in the 2016 national elections; and
6. Increased awareness and willingness to participate in local development initiatives in the Philippines.



Overseas Voting Campaign

Relative to the government's extensive campaign in encouraging overseas Filipinos to register and exercise their right to vote for the 2016 Presidential Elections, the CFO, Commission on Elections and the Department of Foreign Affairs opened one of the Overseas Voters Registration Centers (OVRC) at CFO Manila on July 21, 2014.

The OVRC at CFO got the biggest share in processing new overseas voter registrant applications with 37.8 percent among Overseas Voters Registration Centers in the Philippines. It remains to lead with a total of 18,736 new overseas voter registrants as of June 2015.

On June 2015, the CFO released a poster on overseas voting for distribution to Philippine embassies and consulates, as well as Filipino communities overseas, to bolster registration figures.

Registration activities are also ongoing in all Philippine Foreign Service Posts. Qualified registrants need only present their passports when they register at Philippine embassies, consulates and other designated registration centers in the Philippines and abroad.

VOTE AND CHOOSE THE PHILIPPINES' NEXT NATIONAL LEADERS IN THE 2016 NATIONAL ELECTIONS!
THIS IS A RIGHT OF EVERY OVERSEAS FILIPINO.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE REGISTRATION AS AN OVERSEAS VOTER FOR THE COMING 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS ON OCTOBER 31, 2015.

If you are residing or working abroad, of legal age (18 years old and above) and eligible to vote, you may visit the nearest Philippine Embassy or Consulate to register.

If you are still in the Philippines, but expecting to be abroad during the time of the election, you may visit any of the following agencies to register:



Commission on Elections (COMELEC)
Palacio del Gobernador Bldg., Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila
Website: www.comelec.gov.ph



Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)
EDSA cor. Ortigas Ave., Mandaluyong
Website: www.poea.gov.ph



OWWA Training Center
Victoria cor. Solana Sts., Intramuros, Manila
Website: www.owwa.gov.ph



Commission on Filipino Overseas (CFO)
Citigold Center, 1345 Pres. Quirino Ave. cor. Osmeña Highway, Manila
Website: www.cfo.gov.ph

Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA)
Terminals 1, 2 and 3, Pasay City
Website: www.niaa.gov.ph

Philippine Transmarine Carriers Inc.
First Maritime Place, 7458 Bagtikan Street,
San Antonio Village, 1203 Makati City, Philippines
Website: www.ptc.com.ph



Department of Foreign Affairs - Office of Consular Affairs
Macapagal Ave., ASECNA Business Park
Website: www.dfa.gov.ph

Department of Foreign Affairs - Regional Consular Offices (RCO)
• Davao City: 3rd Floor, SM City Davao, Quimpo Blvd., Escalante, Brgy. Malina

• San Fernando, Pampanga: 2F Robinson's Star Mall City
• Cebu: 4th Level, Pacific Mall-Metro Mandaue, UN Ave. cor. MC Briones St., Brgy. Estancia, Mandaue City

Department of Foreign Affairs - Satellite Offices

• Robinson's Galleria: Level 1, Lingad Pinoy Center, EDSA cor. Ortigas Ave.

• SM Manila: 5th Floor, SM City Manila, Concepcion St., Manila

• Cubao: Al Mall, Level 2, Cubao, Quezon City

• Marina Manila: 5th & 6th Floor, Parkview Plaza, Taft Avenue cor. T.M. Kalaw, Manila

Website: www.dfa-oavs.gov.ph

Requirements in registration:

- Personal appearance at the Philippines Embassy, Consulate, Mission, MECCO or any COMELEC approved registration sites for BIOMETRICS requirements (photo, thumb print mark, signature).
- Passport or DFA certification; or any valid IDs for those without passport.
- Completed OV registration/certification form (OVF No.1) which can be downloaded from the following websites: www.comelec.gov.ph and www.dfa.gov.ph

NOTE:

Overseas voter registrants may also visit irehistro.comelec.gov.ph/ov to access iREHISTRO, an online system which provides an alternative way in accomplishing registration forms. The iREHISTRO is accessible in all Philippines Embassies, Consulates and Mission, except China and Taiwan.



BE ENGAGED AND BE COUNTED! REGISTER NOW AND VOTE IN THE 2016 PHILIPPINE NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

A friendly reminder from:



COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS
Citigold Center, 1345 Pres. Quirino Avenue cor. Osmeña Highway, Manila, Philippines 1007
Tel. No. : (632) 952-4700 | Fax No.: (632) 561-8332 | Email: info@cfo.gov.ph | Website: www.cfo.gov.ph



BaLinkBayan ba-linkbayan.gov.ph [ba-linkbayan](https://www.facebook.com/balinkbayan) [ba-linkbayan](https://www.youtube.com/balinkbayan)



EDITA DACUYCUY
Business: Dragon Fruit Plantation
Burgos, Ilocos Norte

THE DRAGON FRUIT LADY OF THE NORTH

If there's only one fruit that would make it to the eco-tourism map of Ilocos Norte, it would be no other than the Dragon Fruit. The first and biggest Dragon Fruit Plantation and Resort in the Philippines – the REFMAD (which stands for Rare Eagle Forest Marine Agricultural Development), was established in Burgos, Ilocos Norte. The Plantation and Resort sells fresh dragon fruits and showcases all the products derived from it. In fact, almost everyday, group of tourists going to or coming from Pagudpud drop by REFMAD to taste one of its bestseller offerings – the dragon fruit ice cream.

REFMAD was the brainchild of Edita Dacuycu, also known as the dragon fruit lady of the North. A mother of four, she started out with just a small backyard garden of dragon fruit for her daughter Kate who is afflicted with cerebral palsy, a neurological condition that affects physical and brain activities. Some indicators of the disorder are constipation and problem in bowel movement. The scaly bright pink exotic fruit reminiscent of dragon scales, proved to be good for the digestive problem of her daughter, that she eventually expanded her property to plant more of the vine-like epiphytic cactus. With the help of her late husband and other daughter who studied dragon fruit technology abroad, REFMAD now covers a total area of 30 hectares. It also has cottages and accommodations with swimming pools for guests who would like to stay overnight or longer to witness the midnight blooming of dragon fruit flowers, experience life in a farm or participate during the dragon fruit harvest festival.

Edita heard of the OF-ReD Project directly from the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte. She was encouraged to apply for a particular project – that is procuring lightbulbs to be used as artificial lighting for the fruit – so it could still produce flowers even during off-season or short day-months from October to March. The cactus usually does not produce fruits during offseason because it is a long-day flowering plant which requires shorter dark nights to produce flowers. With the technology she acquired with the assistance from OF-ReD, she is now able to produce fruits all-year long. She was also able to explore more possibilities with the Dragon Fruit-making it a “wasteless” product. Aside from the ice cream, other dragon fruit food and beauty health products that are being sold at REFMAD include wine, vinegar, tea, cookies, hopia, lumpia, and soap.

Edita is truly thankful for having been blessed with an opportunity to generate more jobs for fellow Ilocanos and to improve the Dragon Fruit industry of the country. She has seven regular employees working full time in the plantation, and additional 15 on-call, especially during harvest season. She is also helping and technically assisting several other dragon fruit growers nationwide. Over the years, her efforts and innovativeness have been widely recognized both locally and internationally. Edita hopes to encourage more people to improve their lives through the Dragon Fruit, just the way it brought success to her family.

Overseas Filipinos Remittance for Development (OF-ReD)

In 2011, UNDP and the Western Union Foundation, together with the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) and the local government of Ilocos Norte province launched the Overseas Filipinos Remittances for Development (OF-ReD) project. The OF-ReD is designed to address the goal of harnessing the potential of overseas remittances for poverty reduction and consequently, local economic development. It aims to support policies that transform overseas remittances for development, savings and investments, and build up viable collective remittance fund.

The pilot area is the province of Ilocos Norte, in the northern region of the Philippines.



Collective Remittance Fund

In 2012, a Collective Remittance Fund worth PHP 3 million had been set up to finance the credit needs of new or existing migrant owned enterprises in the area. The fund came about when the Provincial government of Ilocos Norte, the Western Union Foundation and the Cooperative Bank of Ilocos Norte, which is also the depository bank, pooled in PHP1 million each to jumpstart the fund. Overseas based Ilocanos will be enjoined to participate by donating to the fund and this is what the project will do in the next few months.

Availment

The fund is limited to former or active overseas Filipino or their dependents with new or existing income generating enterprise. The minimum loan that can be availed is PHP15,000 with the maximum at half a million pesos. The special interest rate is 12% per annum.

In 2013, there were 46 loan applications filed. Of this number, 14 applications were approved amounting to PHP 1.28 million. Loans went to fund micro-small enterprises such as dragon fruit planting, bagnet making, rice trading, hog breeding, sari-sari (retail) stores etc.

To date, the OF-ReD Collective Remittance Fund has already financed 34 enterprises with 37 loan releases worth PHP 3.35 million since 2013 (last quarter) to 31 March 2015. Most of the borrowers are women whose entrepreneurship generated local employment, sustained and increased family income and contributed to the local economic development. The Fund has been fully utilized and was infused with additional funds by the Cooperative Bank of Ilocos Norte (the depository bank).



Remittance for Development Council (ReDC)

The Remittance for Development Council (ReDC) is an offshoot of the Overseas Filipinos-Remittance for Development (OF-ReD) which the CFO is currently undertaking in partnership with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) through the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Western Union Foundation (WUF).

ReDC is both an advisory and policy recommending body and a venue for regular dialogues and

feedback on issues regarding remittances like lower remittance costs; easier, greater and faster access to remittance channels; more innovative and non-traditional remittance conduits. It is composed of partners from the government, the private sector (banks and remittance agents), civil society and the academe. Government regulatory agencies such as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and international organizations such as the UN Development Programme serve as ReDC's development partners.



CFO Signs MOU on the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), along with 12 chief regulatory authorities and government agencies led by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that formalized the creation of the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (NSFI) on July 1, 2015.

In his welcome remarks, BSP Governor Amando M. Tetangco, Jr. called the launching of the NSFI "the beginning of our collective journey to change Filipino lives for the better. This is an enduring vision of the Philippine government which will support inclusive growth, one that will promote shared economic development, uphold social cohesion and reduce income inequality. This is explicit in the Philippine Development Plan."

The NSFI will serve as the Philippines' roadmap toward an inclusive financial system which will grant effective access to a wide range of financial products, and mainstream Filipinos across the country as regular clients of the country's financial system. This will include sectors which are typically unserved or under-served by conventional financial service providers such as overseas Filipinos and their beneficiaries, MSMEs, women, and the youth.

Recognizing the significance of the NSFI's role in assisting our Filipino overseas and the families they left behind, the CFO, led by Secretary Imelda Nicolas,

was actively involved throughout the consultation process. As member of the High Level Inter-Agency for the NSFI and as part of all four Technical Working Groups, Policy, Regulation and Supervision, Financial Education Consumer Protection, Advocacy and Data Measurement, CFO participated in crafting the framework and key areas in implementing programs, monitoring and evaluating progress of financial inclusion.

No less than Queen Maxima of the Netherlands has signified her full support to NSFI. As the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance Development, Queen Maxima is a strong advocate of financial inclusion in her own country, particularly in promoting financial literacy and education.

In her speech, she emphasized the significance of financial inclusion in developing countries such as the Philippines. She encouraged the multi-stakeholder partnership by stating, "It's a means to an end... We have evidence that says financial inclusion is not only pro-growth but also pro-poor."

The creation of the NSFI will finally raise the level of awareness, appreciation and understanding of financial inclusion across stakeholders and enable coordination which will serve as a platform to maximize linkages toward financial inclusion.

First Regional Consultation on Migrants Caught in Countries in Crisis held in Manila

On 23-24 March, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), on behalf of the Philippine government, hosted a regional consultation for South, South-East and East Asian countries under the global 'Migrants in Countries in Crisis' (MICIC) initiative. The meeting provided an opportunity for governments to exchange views and identify best practices on how to assist migrants in countries in crisis. As Ambassador Guy Ledoux of the EU Delegation to the Philippines explained in his opening remarks, 'we know that many countries, notably the Philippines but also others in Asia, already have good systems in place to protect their nationals abroad, and we want to learn from these experiences'.

The meeting was organised in collaboration with the United States State Department and the European Commission, with funding from the EU's Global Public Goods and Challenges programme. This is the first of the six MICIC-focused regional consultations envisioned with EU funding.

When conflict or disasters hit, international migrants present in the crisis-stricken country are often among the affected population. For a variety of factors, migrants can be especially vulnerable during crises. In some cases, migrants may be trapped, unable to leave the crisis area, in others they may be unwilling to leave or unable to access humanitarian assistance, while in others they may

seek refuge across borders in adjacent countries. For example, the civil war in Libya in 2011 saw thousands of migrants from Asian countries in need of humanitarian aid and repatriation assistance.

In order to improve responses to the impact of acute crises on migrants, the US and the Philippines launched a global initiative in 2014 on Migrants in Countries in Crisis, in collaboration with the European Commission, Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica and Ethiopia. Aside from the CFO, the Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Foreign Affairs represent the Philippine government in the MICIC initiative.

The initiative is working to develop a set of non-binding voluntary guidelines and best practices that will be used by governments, international organisations, civil society and private sector actors. According to Imelda Nicolas, Secretary of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, the mantra of the initiative is 'to save lives, increase protection, decrease vulnerabilities and improve responses'.

The meeting was attended by over 100 persons, including government officials of 16 countries, as well as representatives of international organisations, civil society, and the private sector. It was organised with the support of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).



Migrants in Countries in Crisis

Because of the number of natural disasters and conflicts having occurred over the past years and with more people living and working outside their home countries, the plight of migrants caught in crises has become increasingly palpable.

When countries experience such crises, migrants may lack adequate means to ensure their own safety and do not fall under a specific protection mandate. More often than not, they have limited access to traditional humanitarian responses.

In response, the state-led initiative Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC), headed by the Philippines and the United States of America was created following the UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development held in New York last October 2013. As it targets specific situations, that is, countries caught in crisis, the outcome from the initiative will be

useful for governments and other stakeholders in addressing a broader range of migration scenarios.

During the UN Conference, Secretary General Ban-Ki-Moon recognized the very pro-active and comprehensive efforts of the Philippines when it comes to responding to the plight of Overseas Filipinos wherever countries in crisis they may be.

In order to compile best practices and examine the roles and responsibilities of various actors, broad consultations with all relevant stakeholders – governments, international organizations, private sector, civil society, experts and diaspora/migrants groups were identified.

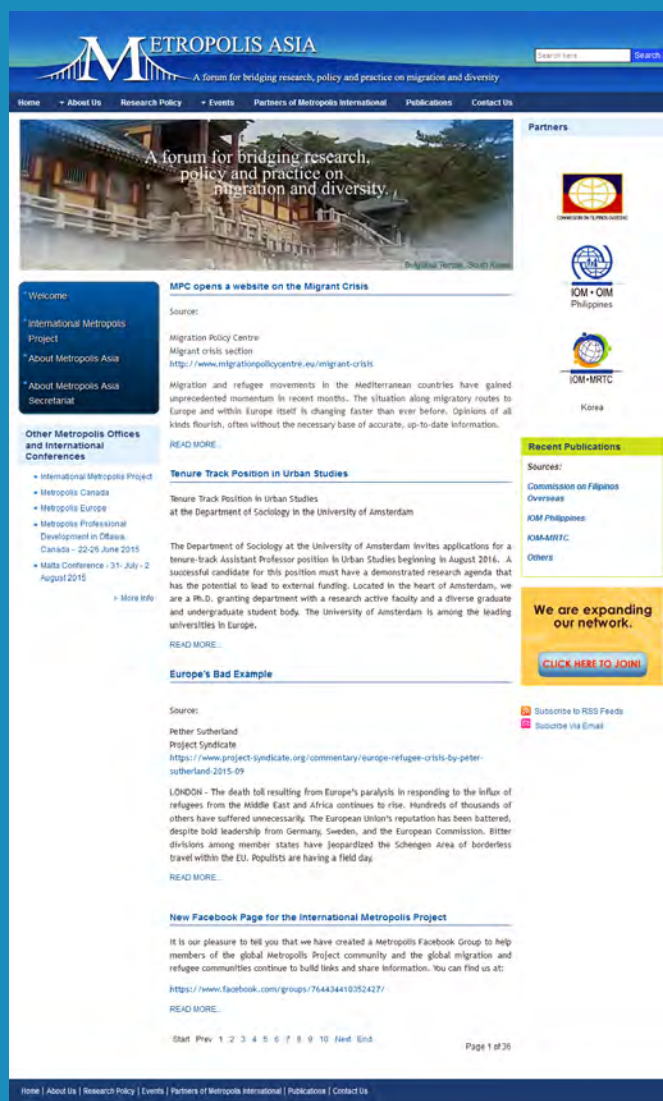
The first and second regional consultations were held in Manila and Brussels on March and June of this year, respectively.

Metropolis Asia

As the Asian arm of Metropolis International, Metropolis Asia is directed towards the development of strategic responses to the effects of international migration and capacity building of its partners in the Asia-Pacific region via information and data sharing. This purpose is expected to be achieved through the establishment of a virtual research network that gathers key resources in which one of the primary channels would be the organization's website.

The website, www.metropolisasia.org was created and launched by the CFO in collaboration with the other members of the Metropolis Asia Secretariat namely the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Philippines, IOM Migration Research and Training Centre Korea and the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS). The Metropolis Asian Secretariat supports the Metropolis International Steering Committee (ISC) through ensuring adequate communication among partners as well as taking direct responsibility for the implementation of ISC-approved work program in Asia.

The network aims to centralize relevant research and information on migration and development and to offer a virtual space for exchange and learning. It intends to support and encourage coordination and cooperation between Metropolis Asia, Metropolis International and its stakeholders.



www.metropolisasia.org

AGENCY EXPENDITURE PROGRAM

(in thousand pesos)

No/ Code	GASS/ STO/ OPERATIONS/ PROJECTS	2014 Actual	2015 Programmed	2016 Proposed
General Administration and Support				
	Personal Services	9,711	6,698	9,558
	Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses	6,735	19,805	21,361
	Capital Outlay	7	3,810	
	Sub-total			30,919
Operations/1				
	Personal Services	23,221	21,975	22,210
	Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses	18,927	21,663	21,664
	Capital Outlay			1
	Sub-total			43,875
Projects/2				
	Personal Services	15		
	Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses	18,613	10,329	6,280
	Capital Outlay	5,357	1,032	7,676
TOTAL AGENCY BUDGET		82,586	85,312	88,750
	Personal Services	32,947	28,673	31,768
	Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses	44,275	51,797	49,305
	Capital Outlay	5,364	4,842	7,677

STAFFING SUMMARY		2014	2015	2016
TOTAL STAFFING				
	Total Number of Authorized Positions	64	64	64
	Total Number of Filled Positions	61	62	62

OPERATIONS BY MFO		PROPOSED 2016			
		PS	MOOE	CO	TOTAL
MFO 1	Overseas Filipino Welfare Services	22,210	21,664	1	43,875

PROJECTS		PROPOSED 2016			
		PS	MOOE	CO	TOTAL
Locally Funded Projects					
	Enhanced Frontline Mission Systems Project		2,050	2,886	4,936
	BaLinkBayan Portal		4,230	4,790	9,020
	Total		6,280	7,676	13,956

SECTION 2: EXPENDITURE PROGRAM BY CENTRAL OFFICE/ REGIONAL ALLOCATION		PROPOSED 2016			
		PS	MOOE	CO	TOTAL
	Region				
	National Capital Region (Cental Office)	31,768	49,305	7,677	88,750
TOTAL AGENCY BUDGET		31,768	49,305	7,677	88,750

THE FORCE BEHIND CFO



“

Allow me to quote from the book entitled, *Global Diaspora, Strategies Toolkit: Harnessing the Power of Global Diasporas*: “The key to success... is identifying exceptional people and organizations in the diaspora and connecting them with exceptional people and organizations in the home country.”

I know there will be days when you would like to express your ire at our government. Please remember these young men and women. They are the backbone of our government bureaucracy. They work behind the scene, doing their job without fanfare.

Whenever I ask my CFO staff to do something more difficult than usual, they usually end their email with “*Para sa Bayan*” then proceed in accomplishing things way over and beyond the call of duty, like what they have been doing in the past.

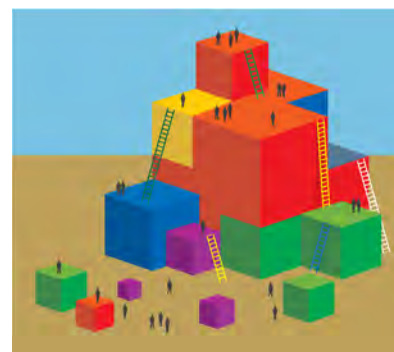
”

— Secretary Imelda M. Nicolas

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT-RELATED EXCERPTS / PROVISIONS IN THE PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011-2016

The Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016 serves as a guide in formulating policies and implementing development programs for the next six years. It enables the government, in partnership with the private sector and the civil society, to work systematically to give the Filipino people a better chance of finally finding their way out of poverty, inequality, and the poor state of human development.

The following are some of the migration and development-related excerpts/ provisions in the PDP which the CFO strongly advocated, in line with its vision of being the Philippines' premier institution in promoting policies, programs, and projects with Migration and Development (M&D) as a framework:



60 provisions on Migration and Development were included in 7 out of 10 chapters of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016

CHAPTER 1: In Pursuit of Inclusive Growth

What Is Inclusive Growth (p. 18)

"Inclusive growth means, first of all, growth that is rapid enough to matter, given the country's large population, geographical differences and social complexity. It is sustained growth that creates jobs, draws the vast majority into the economic and social mainstream, and continuously reduces mass poverty. This is an ideal relative to which the country has perennially fallen short, and this failure has had the most far-reaching consequences, from mass misery and marginalization, to an overseas exodus of skill and talent, to political disaffection and alienation, leading finally to threats to the constitution of the state itself."

How Shall We Achieve Inclusive Growth (p. 31)

"Relations with foreign nations shall be actively cultivated to support sovereignty, regional peace and security, and economic cooperation based on equitable and mutual benefit. Paramount consideration shall be paid to ensuring the welfare and protection of the millions of Filipinos working overseas."

A Window of Opportunity (p. 32)

"In economic terms, the country's external payments and international credit position have not been healthier in decades for various reasons. Thanks to overseas remittances, surpluses on current account have been run consistently since 2003."

(p. 33)

"Nor should it be forgotten that today's chances were purchased by past sacrifices: by overseas workers who endured separation from their families; by laborers and farmers who experienced wrenching structural changes; by the middle class and other taxpayers who shouldered the debt burdens of the past; by government personnel who soldiered on professionally despite the rot surrounding them; and by the brave and vigilant citizenry who never lost faith in constitutional values, democratic processes and the possibility of an honest government."

CHAPTER 2: Macroeconomic Policy

OUTPUT & EMPLOYMENT (Economic Performance 2004-2010)

(p. 36)

"GDP growth averaged 5.6 percent for the period 2004–2006, while average GNP growth was higher at 5.9 percent, boosted by transfers from overseas workers."

(p. 37)

"Overall, consumption fuelled by remittances is the largest and most stable source of growth from the demand side. The contribution of net exports (including BPO), although volatile, was also positive."



(pp. 38-39)

"Private construction likewise grew 13.3 percent, boosted by remittance-fuelled residential construction as well as the need for more supply of office space. Overall, capital formation grew 12.4 percent, up from the 5.1 percent growth of a year ago and the 8.8 percent contraction two years previously. Likewise, private consumption, which constitutes the largest proportion of GDP on the expenditure side, continued its stable growth at 5.9 percent, fuelled by remittances from overseas workers."

EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

(p. 43)

"This partly reflects the difficulty of gaining employment in the formal labor market and implies a high incidence of informal sector work. In addition, the 43.2 percent "educated unemployed" out of the total unemployed labor force is also very high, a symptom of the labor mismatch in the country and a factor contributing to the growing deployment of Filipino workers overseas, averaging about 1.1 million per year."

(p. 44)

“The sheer volume of workers working temporarily overseas indicates the lack of employment opportunities and suggests that domestic investments and entrepreneurship are being held back. These constraints need to be addressed along with strategies formulated to ensure that the working poor and the unemployed can participate and benefit from the development process.”

“Furthermore, policymakers will need to focus on leveraging remittances as a tool for economic development.”

MONETARY AND EXTERNAL SECTORS (External Sectors)

(p. 51)

“The current account balance as a ratio of GDP has increased from 1.9 percent in 2004 to 4.5 percent in 2010. The current account position has shifted to structural surpluses in large part due to the resilience of overseas remittances, increased services receipts from business process outsourcing and steady tourism receipts. These sources of foreign exchange inflows have been more stable than investment flows.”

(p. 51)

“Overseas Filipino (OF) remittances have been steadily growing even when the global financial crisis broke out. In 2010, remittances coursed through banks amounted to US\$18.8 billion, an increase by 8.2 percent from the level recorded in previous year.”

MONETARY POLICY AND EXTERNAL SECTOR REFORMS

(p. 60)

“Furthermore, policymakers will need to focus on leveraging remittances as a tool for economic development. While remittances are private transfers, the government can ensure that the policy environment is conducive to the use of remittances for investment in well-considered financial products, in productive activities such as entrepreneurial undertaking as well as in better housing, education and healthcare for remitters and their beneficiaries. Improving the financial education of the overseas Filipino community and implementing measures to further promote the flow of remittances through the financial system would help catalyze the developmental role of remittances.”

CHAPTER 3: Competitive Industry and Services Sector

(p. 62)

“By addressing the country’s problem of low competitiveness, this Plan aims to promote higher growth in per capita GDP and boost employment. The focus shall be to enable the industry and services sectors to contribute to massive job generation, provide opportunities for Filipinos to rise above poverty, and ultimately offer a meaningful choice for Filipinos to pursue gainful employment here or abroad.”



(p. 63)

“Government shall promote sustainable livelihood and micro enterprise development, harnessing the Overseas Filipinos (OFs) community as a source of capital.”

EXPORT OF GOODS AND SERVICES

(p. 67)

“Globally, the evolution in technology, prioritization of business strategies, migration, innovation and trends, environment-consciousness, and value for money have influenced the emergence of technology-based sectors, strengthened hospitality services and increased the capability for borderless transactions. The Government has been vigilant in the growth of these industries, two of which are the BPOs and tourism.”

Tourism (p. 69)

“Tourism is regarded as the fourth largest contributor to foreign exchange receipts. The top three are electronics and semiconductors, overseas Filipino remittances and BPO.”

TEN-POINT AGENDA

Goal 2: Action Agenda to improve productivity and efficiency (p. 85)

“To ensure market-responsive education and training, the supply side of the labor equation should be addressed through quality education/training and effective assessment and certification systems. The government shall undertake and maximize capacity-building programs with the support of foreign governments and intra-government organizations under the framework of various bilateral and multilateral engagements. Likewise, linkages among Filipino skilled workers and their business network, technical experts and Filipinos involved in epistemic communities abroad shall pursue various multi-stakeholder talent-sharing, brain-gain and skills enhancement initiatives (e.g., Science and Technology Advisory Council, the Balik-Scientist Program and ERDT).

In addition, “sunrise” industrial or service activities with global potential shall be identified by roadmaps that forecast and prepare initiatives for skills requirements on employment needs. From 2007 to 2010, four roadmaps were developed for such industries: (a) electronics, (b) BPO/IT enabled-services, (c) medical tourism, and (d) health and wellness (including the retirement) sectors. By 2016, roadmaps for the remaining sunrise industries namely, agribusiness, eco-mining, value chain materials, and manufacturing, shall be developed to complement the employment requirements. In cooperation with higher education institutions and the private sector, niches shall be identified and matched with the employment needs and strategic positioning of local firms and industries.”

“ **A more aggressive campaign to tap OFs as sources of capital shall be pursued.** ”

Focus Interventions To Increase Exports/ Investments/ Tourism (p. 87)

“Undertake a focused and sustained international and domestic tourism promotion campaign and programs using both traditional and the new social networking media targeting existing and new markets as well as OFs.

(pp. 87-88)

Launch focused and sustained international and domestic tourism programs using the new media with the support of OFs. Likewise, the support and cooperation mechanism for private sector and non-government



organization's participation shall be enhanced. Efficient intra-government coordination system shall be put into practice in tourism promotional and planning activities. These shall involve the Tourism Promotions Board (as mandated by the Tourism Act of 2009) and the respective tourism related promotional units of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Health (DOH), Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA), Board of Investments (BOI), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and the

various agencies and councils supporting culture and the arts (i.e., CCA, FDCP, and so forth). The entry of tourists under thematic programs (e.g., health and wellness and employment generation) shall be further facilitated in coordination with the DFA, Department of Justice (DOJ) and the BOI. Such a multi-dimensional stakeholder approach shall maximize the promotion of medical tourism; retirement; meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE); adventure and ecotourism; film production, and Philippine cultural and culinary diversity.”

Promote Entrepreneurship among OFs (p. 95)

“A more aggressive campaign to tap OFs as sources of capital shall be pursued. Government shall utilize media and various forums, including presidential and official trips, in encouraging entrepreneurship among OFs and/or their dependents. DTI and DOLE shall review and strengthen existing programs and consider ways to maximize the brain-gain derived by OFs from foreign deployment. The DFA, DOLE, DOF, Commission on Filipinos Overseas, and the Bangko Sentral shall conduct financial literacy campaigns overseas to educate and orient OFs regarding their investment and remittance options which may include special bond issuances and related financial instruments.



(p. 95)

The government shall continue to implement the national innovation strategy called Filipinovation.”

CHAPTER 6: Towards a Resilient and Inclusive Financial Sector

ASSESSMENT AND CHALLENGES

(p. 182)

“Together with improved macroeconomic conditions, the steady inflow of remittances from OFWs, a minimal investment exposure to foreign structured products and a low dependence on exports, these reforms allowed the financial system to avoid the worst difficulties encountered by other economies during the 2007-2008 financial crises.”

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Specific Reform Strategies

Credit Surety Fund Program (CSF) (p. 194)

“The CSF is a program that involves the creation of a trust fund contributed by cooperatives from a province and its provincial government intended primarily to make micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) bankable by giving them access to formal sources of financing by means of a surety cover as a substitute for collateral.”

Micro-Housing (p. 194)

“5. Encourage the continuing development of new loan products and other banking services aimed to address the special needs of the poor, women and persons with disability (PWDs).”

Unlike other borrowers, the target market for microfinance products such as those belonging to the agriculture sector might have cash flows that are different from those observed from the usual borrower. Likewise, there is a wide variety in the purpose of their loan application: consumption smoothing, financing for educational needs and funds for migration purposes such as placement fees, document processing fees. Hence, these warrant the introduction of financial products specifically designed for this group of borrowers.”

Establish a strong legal framework for financial sector development (p. 200)

“4. Provide an adequate legal framework to encourage greater investor participation, address financial taxation and effective oversight of the national payments systems.

A Collective Investment Schemes Law (CISL) to broaden investor participation in the securities market, including participation by Overseas Filipinos.”

“ **Promote greater financial literacy of the population, including those in the countryside and OFW-rich areas abroad.** ”

(p. 201)

“8. Introduce alternative savings and investment products through the following specific reforms:

Address the needs of the resurgent real estate industry by providing funds for infrastructure projects, widening access to investment in real estate projects, broadening the participation of the public, including OFs, in the ownership of real estate, and protecting the investing public from abuses of real estate investment trusts pursuant to provisions of the Real Estate Investment Trust or REIT Act of 2009 (RA 9856).”

(p. 202)

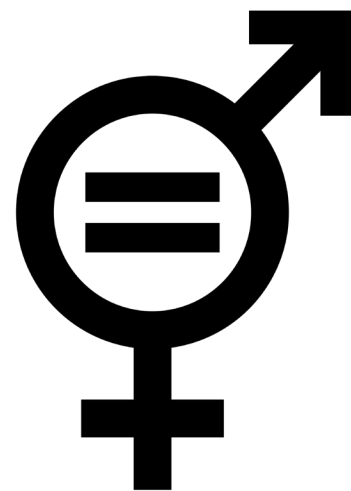
“11. Empowerment of Filipino consumers through strong consumer protection mechanisms and financial literacy or education programs:

a) Promote greater financial literacy of the population, including those in the countryside and OFW-rich areas abroad by encouraging the participation of non-government and private sector organizations in the delivery of financial education programs.”

CHAPTER 7: Good Governance and the Rule of Law

Gender Roles in Governance Structures (p. 214)

“Major progress has been slow, however, as seen in more recent international gender assessments. The Gender Development Index in the 2009 Human Development Report of the UNDP and the Country Gender Assessment of the ADB in 2008 showed similar findings that the Philippines’ workforce continues to be dominated by males, despite increasing numbers of women having higher educational attainment. Women continue to be burdened by the debilitating impact of poverty and the lingering economic crisis, and out-migration among women remains high, with many in service and domestic occupations. The challenge remains for government to ensure that statutory mandates relating to gender and development concerns are observed and implemented efficiently and effectively by all concerned sectors.”



Strengthen the Rule of Law (p. 227)

“Increase resources for justice sector agencies and quasi-judicial bodies.

Modernize and upgrade facilities for law enforcers such as the PNP and the NBI crime laboratories, forensic investigation facilities and equipment. Improve capacities of prosecutors and law enforcers, particularly NBI agents, in the investigation and prosecution of special cases involving economic or white-collar crimes such as money laundering, tax evasion, smuggling, human trafficking, violations of intellectual property rights and antitrust laws, illegal drugs, and even cases involving extra-legal killings and other human rights violations as well as violation of environmental laws.”

CHAPTER 8: Social Development

ASSESSMENT (Social Protection)

(p. 244)

“Wide disparities across regions were also evident. Among regions, ARMM had the highest poverty incidence in 2006, according to six basic sector categories, namely: children, farmers, youth, urban population, and senior citizens. CARAGA had the highest poverty incidence under fisherfolk and migrant and formal sectors (Annex 8.9). Meanwhile, NCR posted the lowest poverty incidence in five sectors, namely children, women, youth, senior citizens, and migrant and formal sector workers (NSCB, 2006).”



(p. 244)

“Region 6 had the most number of poor youth and migrant and formal workers.”

(p. 245)

“The limited coverage of the social security schemes (i.e., Government Service Insurance System, Social Security System or SSS) means that the larger part of the workforce found in the informal and vulnerable occupations are marginalized. Although there have been attempts by PhilHealth to cover the poor and unemployed, as well as workers in the informal sector (IS) and those working overseas, universal membership has yet to be achieved.”

Children (p. 246)

“Children in especially difficult circumstances include street children, victims of child abuse and commercial sexual exploitation, child victims of prostitution and pornography, children in conflict with the law, children in situations of armed conflict, children with disabilities, child victims of illegal recruitment and trafficking, and child laborers.”

Women (p. 246)

“While Filipino women may be considered as relatively advanced vis-a-vis women in other developing countries (e.g., in the areas of education, profession, politics, and legislation), they also suffer from domestic violence, economic disadvantages, discrimination at the workplace, exploitation as migrant workers and prostituted women, and displacement brought about by the intermittent wars in conflict-affected areas. In general, women are in disadvantaged position due to differences in gender roles that limit their access to productive resources and basic services.

(p. 246)

In 2008, 54.7 percent of the total number of female OFWs were laborers and unskilled workers, including domestic helpers, cleaners and manufacturing laborers. Remittances from female OFWs worldwide were relatively lower than from their male counterparts.”

Elderly (p. 247)

"In 2003 and 2006, the number of elderly people in the Philippines was estimated at about 5.2 million and 6.3 million, respectively. Some of the risks and vulnerabilities of the elderly included loss of income as a result of retirement, disability and impairment of functions affecting their quality of life, lack of or inadequate health care insurance and lack of adequate living conditions for those who live alone. There was also a rise in the number of elderly persons who were victims of violence and abandonment due to in and out migration of younger family members."



Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) (p. 247)

"Social security and protection of OFWs are growing concerns, given the limited coverage of the Social Security System (SSS), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC) and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA). Out of 8.6 million overseas Filipinos (OFs) in 2009, 4 million are permanent migrants, 3.9 million are temporary OFWs and 658,370 are irregular migrants."

"There is, therefore, a need to review the viability of current social security and welfare fund schemes, given the limited capacity and resources of the country's social security and welfare fund institutions. Another challenge is the exclusion of domestic workers, the top occupational category with respect to deployment of land-based OFWs, in most of the social security laws particularly in top destination countries."

“**Social security and protection of OFWs are growing concerns, given the limited coverage of the SSS, PHIC and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration...**”

Displaced Workers (p. 248)

"While the global financial crisis had a minimal impact on the deployment of OFWs, OWWA and POEA data indicated that 6,957 workers in 327 companies lost their jobs mostly from factories in Taiwan and South Korea. Of this number, nearly two-thirds (4,495) returned to the Philippines."

Education, Training and Culture (p. 270)

"Devise a transnational education (TNE) strategy in programs and services for both in-bound and out-bound students and workers, including mutual recognition/accreditation of skills and professional development of Filipino workers vis-a-vis neighboring countries. Reasonable and mutually beneficial supervision and regulation of TNE should lead to quality assurance and management of foreign providers, as well as the integrity and competitiveness of Filipino providers."

Labor Market Interventions

(p. 271)

"Balance the demands of globalization through a locally-adapted/indigenized curricula that promote and preserve indigenous knowledge by:

“...making the education system responsive to the needs of the global community, while minimizing brain drain, encouraging brain gain and protecting the Filipino family from the social costs of migration.”

(a) expanding and upgrading the capacity to teach foreign languages in response to the requirements of internationally-shared human resources and emerging needs in the ASEAN region; (b) integrating balanced messages on migration and development in the Philippine education, both in the formal and alternative learning system; (c) making the education system responsive to the needs of the global community, while minimizing brain-drain, encouraging brain-gain and protecting the Filipino family from the social costs

of migration; and, (d) encouraging Filipinos overseas to remain rooted in their culture through an appreciation of Filipino languages, culture and heritage.”

(p. 274)

“Implement active labor market policies and programs to enhance the employability of vulnerable workers, such as those affected by crisis, workers in the informal economy, displaced and distressed OFWs, internally displaced people, the youth and women: a) Improve access, availability and affordability of training in new skills and occupations; b) Expand training opportunities for vulnerable workers; and c) Facilitate the reintegration of returning OFWs through appropriate training, investment and savings programs.

(p. 274)

Initiate policy interventions, programs, projects, and other measures to ensure the transformation of the brain-drain into a brain-gain phenomenon, and enhance the earning capabilities and entrepreneurship opportunities of returnees.”

Social Insurance

(p. 274)

“1. Achieve and sustain universal coverage of the poorest and more vulnerable sectors, including the IS and OFWs who can afford to pay: a) Enroll the poorest families in PhilHealth by utilizing the NHTS-PR; b) Expand coverage of IS workers, and pursue legislation that mandates the enrolment among IS workers who can afford to pay; c) Provide effective membership services; and d) Secure access to critical outpatient services at accredited rural health units and health centers, and to critical inpatient services at the national and local hospitals.”



(p. 275)

“2. Develop enhanced social insurance measures for vulnerable groups against economic and natural shocks particularly for laid-off workers: a) Implement employment insurance for workers in the private sector and IS; b) Implement indigenous microinsurance schemes and integrate microinsurance into microfinance lending; c) Re-examine whether the SSS contributions required of IS workers remain affordable and realistic; and d) Implement mandatory SSS coverage for landbased OFWs, and include SSS enrollment as prerequisite in the issuance of the Overseas Employment Certificate.”

Social Welfare

(p. 275)

“7. Strengthen measures against human trafficking and provide support for its victims.”

(p. 276)

“8. Fully implement the laws protecting and promoting the rights of vulnerable groups, (e.g., IPRA, Expanded Senior Citizens Act, Amended Magna Carta for PWDs, Magna Carta for Women, Magna Carta for Migrant Workers, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, Juvenile Justice Welfare Act, Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act);”

(p. 276)

“10. Campaign for other countries to ratify international conventions, treaties, standards, and protocols that are relevant to the protection and promotion of the rights and well-being of OFs.”

“ Facilitate the reintegration of returning OFWs through appropriate training, investment and savings programs. ”

“ Campaign for other countries to ratify international conventions, treaties, standards and protocols that are relevant to the protection and promotion of the rights and wellbeing of OFs. ”

Safety Nets

(p. 276)

“5. Strengthen safety nets for OFWs: a) Intensify the effort for OWWA membership enrolment and renewal; and b) Institute dialogues and forge agreements to further strengthen cooperation with labor-receiving countries towards mutual protection and benefits for the OFWs.”

CHAPTER 9: Peace and Security

ASSESSMENTS AND CHALLENGES

(p. 292)

“A stable national security environment is crucial to achieving development, human security and general welfare. Stability can be threatened, however, by internal security concerns such as recurring armed conflict and criminality, together with new global security threats such as terrorism, human trafficking, illegal arms trade, and drug trafficking.”

External Security Challenges

(p. 293)

"As global trade in goods and services and international investment become important drivers of the country's economic growth, government shall continue to be vigilant in responding to crimes that thrive under an environment of increasingly open borders, such as terrorism, human trafficking, arms and drug-trafficking, and smuggling."

(p. 294)

"In addition to territorial threats, the overseas diaspora of Filipinos entails a wider redefinition and understanding of threats to Filipino interests. In particular, the predicament of overseas Filipinos who come into conflict with the laws of other countries poses complex new challenges to the country's conduct of foreign relations, with potential repercussions on issues of sovereignty and territorial integrity."

"...the overseas diaspora of Filipinos entails a wider redefinition and understanding of threats to Filipino interests. In particular, the predicament of overseas Filipinos who come into conflict with the laws of other countries poses complex new challenges to the country's conduct of foreign relations, with potential repercussions on issues of sovereignty and territorial integrity."

(p. 294)

"A comprehensive response to these concerns involves initiatives to improve relations and forge cooperation with other nations to preserve and protect national security and interest, including the welfare of Filipinos living and working abroad."

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Section 2. Ensuring National Security

"2. To assure full capability to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state, the following strategies shall be undertaken:



(p. 299)

Pursue friendly and peaceful bilateral and multilateral relations with other nations and international agencies to promote cooperative projects in the political, economic and military fields, as well as assuring the security and welfare of Filipinos working and living abroad.

(p. 299)

Enhancement of border security through the strict enforcement of the Philippine immigration laws and upgrading of surveillance and detection capacity to thwart the entry of foreign terrorists and other lawless elements as well as human trafficking and smuggling of anti-social goods and weapons of mass destruction."

THE FOLLOWING 15 MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT RELATED PROVISIONS WERE ADDED IN 8 OUT OF 10 CHAPTERS IN THE MIDTERM UPDATE OF THE PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDP) 2011-2016

CHAPTER 1: In Pursuit of Inclusive Growth

INDUSTRY AND SERVICES

(p. 10)

“Over the next three years, growth will be mainly driven by the industry and services sectors (Chapter 3). These sectors are targeted to grow by 7.0 to 8.0 percent in 2014, 7.5 to 8.5 percent in 2015 and 8.0 and 9.0

percent in 2016, resulting in additional employment in said sectors, averaging 887,000 to 921,000 per year from 2014 to 2016. For this to happen, investments in the sectors need to increase, which will raise the demand for labor. Investments are targeted to increase by 36 percent between 2012 and 2016.

“**At the same time, government will continue to promote the country as a desirable investment destination.**”

To achieve the above goals, specific interventions need to be undertaken to improve business climate, increase productivity and improve innovative capacity. At the same time, government will continue to promote the country as a desirable investment destination.”

MACROECONOMIC STABILITY

(p. 27)

“A high proportion of external flows is due to remittances which have proven to be quiet robust even during times of economic crises elsewhere in the world. A big portion of these remittances finances the consumption needs of families left behind. But there may be a substantial portion that is investible. What is needed is a financial instrument that matches the risk-return profile of overseas Filipinos and overseas Filipino workers so that this resource can be channeled to investments that would lead to job creation in the country.”

FINANCIAL INCLUSION

(p. 22)

“Channeling the capital inflows from portfolio capital and overseas Filipino remittances towards investments in the real sector remains a challenge. But if the appropriate match between financial instruments and risk-return profiles of the relevant group can be struck, then the potential for expanding investment and creating employment can be realized.”

“What is needed is a financial instrument that matches the risk-return profile of overseas Filipinos and overseas Filipino workers so that this resource can be channeled to investments that would lead to job creation in the country.”

CHAPTER 2: Macroeconomic Policy

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

(p. 36)

“Rising global demand for professional and skilled Filipino workers and the continuous growth of the information technology-business process management (IT-BPM) services boosted the current account balance. The country's IT-BPM industry got a major boost due to President Aquino's approval of a P 500 million fund for the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), which is expected to provide short-term training for “near-hire” applicants who require remedial training. Meanwhile, the capital and financial account yielded a net inflow of US \$5.7 billion in 2012, slightly lower than the recorded US \$6.0 billion in 2011.”

“The country's IT-BPM industry got a major boost due to President Aquino's approval of a P 500 million fund for the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).”

CHAPTER 3: Competitive and Innovative Industry and Services Sector

SUBSECTOR OUTCOME D: MARKET ACCESS EXPANDED

(p. 69)

“The government will focus its investment promotion activities in the identified priority sectors and provide comprehensive business intelligence to enable businesses to make informed decisions. Investment promotion programs of the national IPAs and LGUs will be harmonized.

The IPAs will intensify promotion efforts in countries such as Japan, Netherlands, US and Korea, while at the same time, strategically reaching out to developmental markets with strong potential for outward investments such as Russia, Brazil, Middle East, among others.

Overseas Filipinos (OFs) will also be tapped as possible sources of investments. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas, DTI, and the Bangkong Sentral ng Pilipinas will continue to conduct financial literacy campaigns among OFs and their families to educate them on business opportunities, investment and remittance options.”

CHAPTER 5: Resilient and Inclusive Financial System

INSURANCE

(p. 109)

“Furthermore, to extend insurance covers to the vulnerable overseas Filipinos worker (OFW), Republic Act No. 10022, amending R.A. 8042 or the “Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995” was passed into law, containing Section 23 on the Compulsory Insurance Coverage for Agency-Hired Workers. In 2012, the number of OFWs and/or beneficiaries who benefited from this program reached 4,630, reflecting an increase of 207.8 percent from 2011 with total benefits paid reaching Php175 million.”

Strategy 1: Manage the capital inflows towards investments in the productive sector(p. 114)

“A big portion of external flows consists of remittances. Unlike foreign direct investment (FDI) and foreign portfolio investments, remittance flows have been proven to be resilient even during times of economic crises elsewhere in the world. This is because of the huge stock of Filipinos overseas, estimated to be about 10.5 million as of 2012 and the wide diversity of countries they are in. Most of these remittances finance the consumption of families left behind. During the early years, some of these are spent to accumulate assets (house, car, other durables) but after a while, the family may be ready to channel some amount to productive investments. The financial sector then needs to design the proper instrument that matches the risk-return profile of this group. In turn, this resource can be channeled to investments that would create jobs in the country.

Regardless of the source, financial inflow is ultimately transmitted as household consumption, a firm’s working capital and investment as financing resources become cheaper. Hence, it may contribute to the expansion of the three main sectors, namely agriculture, industry and services. This also opens opportunities for the banking industry to widen its reach by crafting a delivery mechanism for more productive lending to the real sectors, particularly to the MSME. This would lead to a more stable and diversified loan system that supports job growth.”

“ **The Updated PDP recognizes the role of government in putting in place appropriate safety nets and risk protection for the poor. Financial inclusion will continue to be a major concern given the archipelagic structure of the economy and the significant differences across socioeconomic groups.** ”

Strategy 3: Pursue the financial inclusion agenda (p. 116)

“The Updated PDP recognizes the role of government in putting in place appropriate safety nets and risk protection for the poor. Financial inclusion will continue to be a major concern given the archipelagic structure of the economy and the significant differences across socioeconomic groups.

In order to attain financial inclusion, the government will continue to pursue reforms in policy regulation, supervision and accessibility. Financial education and consumer protection will also be provided.

Through its Economic and Financial Learning Program, the BSP will continue to promote greater public awareness of economic and financial issues and provide information to enable households and businesses to make well-informed economic and financial decisions. As it is, Filipinos overseas and those they left behind are offered seminars and/or literature on financial literacy. This strategy will be maintained and even enhanced.”

CHAPTER 6: Social Development

SUBSECTOR OUTCOME C: SOCIAL PROTECTION EXPANDED

(p. 137)

“Based on the assessment, the country has made significant strides in protecting the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalized from various risks and shocks. But much is still to be done not only in fully protecting them but also in enabling them to adjust to shocks. The major challenges faced by the sector include the following:

- Lack of a targeting mechanism that identifies the vulnerable, as well as the risks and shocks that they confront;
- Need to strengthen capability of LGUs to implement disaster risk reduction strategies and deliver social protection services;
- Limited number of poor and vulnerable beneficiaries despite nationwide implementation of programs and projects;
- Increasing vulnerability of OFWs and migrant workers; and
- Limited social protection interventions for the following sectors: displaced and repatriated workers; informal sector; PWD; orphans; and IPs/indigenous cultural communities.”

CHAPTER 7: Good Governance and the Rule of Law

ENHANCING VOTER'S EDUCATION

(p. 159)

“The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) will continue to harness various media (e.g. print, voice and electronic, etc.) in educating the public about the electoral reforms and activities of the Commission, as well as its stand on various political issues. Voter's education includes warning against campaign violations and information on legal, proper, and novel techniques that local candidates can adapt in their campaigns. The COMELEC will also aim to increase understanding and appreciation of the benefits of the automated election system and provide alternative sources of information which may be accessed with greater ease. It will conduct public demonstrations on the voting machines for special interest groups, walk-ins, and the general public. Furthermore, to increase voter registration and turnout for the next national elections, COMELEC will partner with CSOs in countries with high concentration of overseas Filipinos (OFs) in conducting sustained information dissemination campaigns, especially on The Overseas Voting Act of 2013 (RA 10590), to encourage OFs to register and cast their votes in the 2016 and future national elections.”



STRENGTHENING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

Streamlining government processes (p. 159)

“With the Anti- Red Tape Act or ARTA (RA 9485), NGAs, GOCCs, SUCs and LGUs are required to set up Citizen's Charter where services standards are made known to the public. Efforts were also devoted to improve business-related systems and procedures. For instance, the Business Permits and Licensing Systems (BPLS) were set up to streamline services by imposing a single unified form for applying or renewing processing time. Through the Enhanced Business Name Registration System (EBNRS), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

simplified the business name application process by reducing the required information fields from 36 to 18, thus reducing the application form from nine pages to a single page. From an average of four to eight hours, business name registration is now reduced to 15 minutes anywhere in the Philippines. The BPLS and the EBNRS provide 10.46 million OFs with the initial enabling environment to attract their investments. The BPLS and EBNRS can be integrated into transactional services offered

by BaLinkBayan, the one-stop online government portal dedicated to OFs' engagements in investment, philanthropy, technology and skill transfer, and online government services.”



HARMONIZING GOVERNMENT ICT SYSTEMS

(p. 162)

“Likewise, administrative and field data of various government agencies on international migration will be harmonized for evidence-based policymaking and planning. The Shared Government Information System on Migration (SGISM) will be operationalized in response to the challenges and opportunities of migration.”

CHAPTER 8: Peace and Security

PROTECTING FILIPINO NATIONALS ABROAD

(p. 185)

“Since 2010, the government has assisted over 30,000 overseas Filipinos (OFs) through its various embassies and consulates and provided legal assistance to more than 1,900 OF workers, including those with pending cases as well as victims of human trafficking. Also, the country arranged for the repatriation of over 44,000 OFs in identified hotspots worldwide from 2011 to 2012 and deployed Rapid Response Teams to facilitate repatriation and consular assistance.”



ENHANCING BORDER SECURITY

(p. 185)

"To enhance the country's border security, a Border Crossing Coordination Office was established in immigration field offices and an initial fund was appropriated for 2013 for setting up automated border control system for the Bureau of Immigration (BI). The challenge, however, remains in the enforcement of immigration laws, particularly in detecting and monitoring immigration violations, and the difficulty of locating overstaying and illegal aliens due to inadequate coordination and data sharing system.

After being in the Tier 2 Watch List from 2009 to 2010, the Philippines' status was upgraded to Tier 2 in the US State Department's 2011 Trafficking of Persons Report. Though it retained its Tier 2 status in 2012, the country still falls short in convicting illegal recruiters. RA 10364 expands the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and gives special attention to women and children through additional protection and support."

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Security (p. 197)

New Philippine Immigration Law, amends the old immigration law to improve border control and management in the face of transnational crimes, human trafficking, migration trends, continued increase of overseas workers, and tourism development."

CHAPTER 9: Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Environment and Natural Resources

SUBSECTOR OUTCOME C: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY IMPROVED FOR CLEANER AND HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT

Strategy 13: Strengthen multi-stakeholder participation and partnership in ENR management and governance (p. 231)

"Enabling mechanism will be created to encourage greater participation and stakeholders, including women and Filipino Migrants, in CCAM, DRRM and ENR governance."



NEDA SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE SUB-COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (SCIMD)

The idea that gave birth to the establishment of a singular coordinating body on migration and development began to take shape when CFO convened the Vision 2020 conference “Responding to the Challenges of Migration and Development” in December 2010.

In one of the conference workshops to define the vision for OFs as well as the roadmap towards that vision, one of the identified visions was to have unity between government entities, multi-stakeholder NGO's and private sector on migration and development issues.

In 2013, several opportunities for the coming together of high-level officials from migration-related and development-centered government agencies were convened, and thus watered the seed that was planted back in 2010.

On February 1, 2013, a High-level Roundtable Discussion on Migration Policies was convened by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Philippines to stir the discussion and initiate a policy reflection process on what the Philippines has gotten right (or has fallen short of) in terms of migration management given its role as a global model for migration governance as well as to discuss ways forward. One of the highlights that came out of that meeting is the lack of policy and institutional cohesion and coherence in the governance of migration.

Exactly six months later, another opportunity for migration-related and development-centered government agencies to come together and to bring the discussion on ways forward was provided during the kick-off activity of the OECD project on the “Interrelations between public policies, migration and development in the Philippines” where CFO serves as the focal point for its implementation in the Philippines. During one of the opportunities for discussion, a concrete suggestion was made to create a sub-committee on migration and development under the NEDA structure as the central development planning body of the Philippine government in response to the lack of a regular platform for policy discussions on matters affecting overseas Filipinos.

Taking off from this suggestion, CFO presented the initial proposal to create a Sub-Committee on Migration and Development to the NEDA Social Development Committee Technical Board (NEDA SDC-TB) during its August 15, 2013 meeting. The Department of Labor and Employment in October 2013 and the Department of Foreign Affairs in January 2014 formally communicated to NEDA their concurrence and support for the creation of the proposed sub-committee.

NEDA convened a meeting with CFO, DOLE and DFA to discuss the draft concept paper and terms of reference before the proposed TOR was presented to the NEDA SDC-TB for their endorsement. During the February 28, 2014 meeting of the NEDA SDC-TB, the proposal to create the Sub-Committee on International Migration and Development was endorsed.

NEDA presented the NEDA Social Development Committee resolution creating the SCIMD to the Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cabinet Cluster during its 19 June 2014 meeting. Further inputs were gathered from HDPR member agencies who subsequently approved the resolution creating the SCIMD.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

MIGRATION-RELATED GOALS



At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015 at UN, New York, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.

The Sustainable Development Goals, otherwise known as the Global Goals, build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight anti-poverty targets that the world committed to achieving by 2015. The new SDGs, and the broader sustainability agenda, go much further than the MDGs, addressing the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people, ensuring that no one is left behind.



The following are the migration-related goals and its targets.



GOAL 3. ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

- Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.
- Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States.

GOAL 4. ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

- By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states.



GOAL 5. ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.



GOAL 8. PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

- By 2030 achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
- Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrants workers, particularly women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

GOAL 10. REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

- Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.
- By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%.



GOAL 16. PROMOTE JUST, PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

- End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children.



GOAL 17. REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

- Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of sustainable development goals in all countries, particularly developing countries.
- Encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

Data, monitoring and accountability

- By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

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OVERSEAS FILIPINOS DIASPORA

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It aims to support policies that transform overseas remittances for development, savings and investments, and build up a viable **collective remittance fund**.

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Linkapil provides a mechanism for the transfer of various forms of resources from Filipinos overseas to support small-scale, high impact projects that address the country's social and economic development needs.

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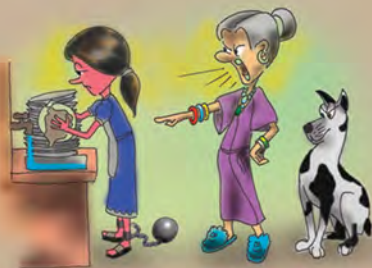


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HUMAN TRAFFICKING...

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING COMES IN MANY FORMS:



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Financial Literacy Program



**Kaalamang
Pinansyal tungo sa
Kaunlaran**

As part of its core mission to assist migrants and their families in preparing for life abroad, the CFO developed and conducts the ***“Kaalamang Pinansyal Tungo Sa Kaunlaran”*** or ***“KAPIT KA!”*** Financial Literacy Program. Activities under the program include lectures and workshops that aim to educate the migrants and other participants on proper management of their finances through savings, budgeting, financial planning, and investments.

The KAPIT KA! training module covers the following topics:

- Knowing your Financial Standing
- The Right Formula of Saving
- Financial Fitness Quiz
- Preparation of Personal Income and Expense Tracker (PIET)
- Prioritizing your Expenses
- 10 Commandments to be Financially Literate
- Preparing your Dream Matrix
- Oath of Financial Literacy

Through this program, CFO seeks to provide migrants and their families with tools to enhance their financial standing and guide them towards reaching their financial goals.





Peso Sense is a nation-wide Financial Literacy campaign funded by the Western Union Foundation, e-Biz and PETNET. It is designed to encourage improving productive expenditure, improve the capacity for saving, and promote entrepreneurship among Filipino beneficiaries of international or domestic remittances. It is implemented by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and overseen by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - Philippines.



Joint Migration and Development Initiative Phase II (JMDI II)



MIGRATION
FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Joint Migration and Development Initiative Phase II is a global program supported by the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It is implemented in eight countries by UNDP and its partners IOM, ILO, UNHCR, UNFPA and UN WOMEN. JMDI II aims to strengthen and reinforce the role of migration for development by upscaling and institutionalizing local migration and development (M&D) initiatives.



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IOM • OIM



International Training Centre



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women



The UN Refugee Agency





Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative

website: micicinitiative.iom.int

The **Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC)** initiative was established following the 2nd UN High-Dialogue on International Migration and Development (October 2013, New York). It is designed to further enhance the ability of states and other relevant stakeholders to prepare, respond and protect the rights and dignity of migrants caught in countries experiencing acute crisis. Through a process of broad and inclusive consultations, this state-led initiative specifically aims to produce a set of voluntary, non-binding guidelines which will define their roles and responsibilities as well as identify effective practices and measures that can be taken to assist migrants.



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IMPROVE RESPONSE.



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Exchange Visitors Program (EVP)

The Philippines is a participant to the Exchange Visitor Program (EVP), an international exchange program administered by the United States of America to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States (US) and the peoples of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange.

An EVP Committee of the Philippines was created to coordinate the participation of the Philippines in the program and properly channel the services of returning participants for the benefit of various projects. It is composed of 11-member government agencies chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs. The CFO serves as the Committee's Secretariat.

Among other functions, the Committee, through the Secretariat, provides pre-departure services to departing EVP participants (or J1 visa holders), including registration and orientation. Topics in the orientation include airport procedures, pre-departure requirements, overview of the EVP, rights and obligations as EVP participants, temporary settlement concerns and others.

From 1998 to the first semester of 2015, records show that 26,708 have registered with the CFO. It has been noted that there is an average of 135% increase annually in the number of EVP participants bound for the US in the last five years.

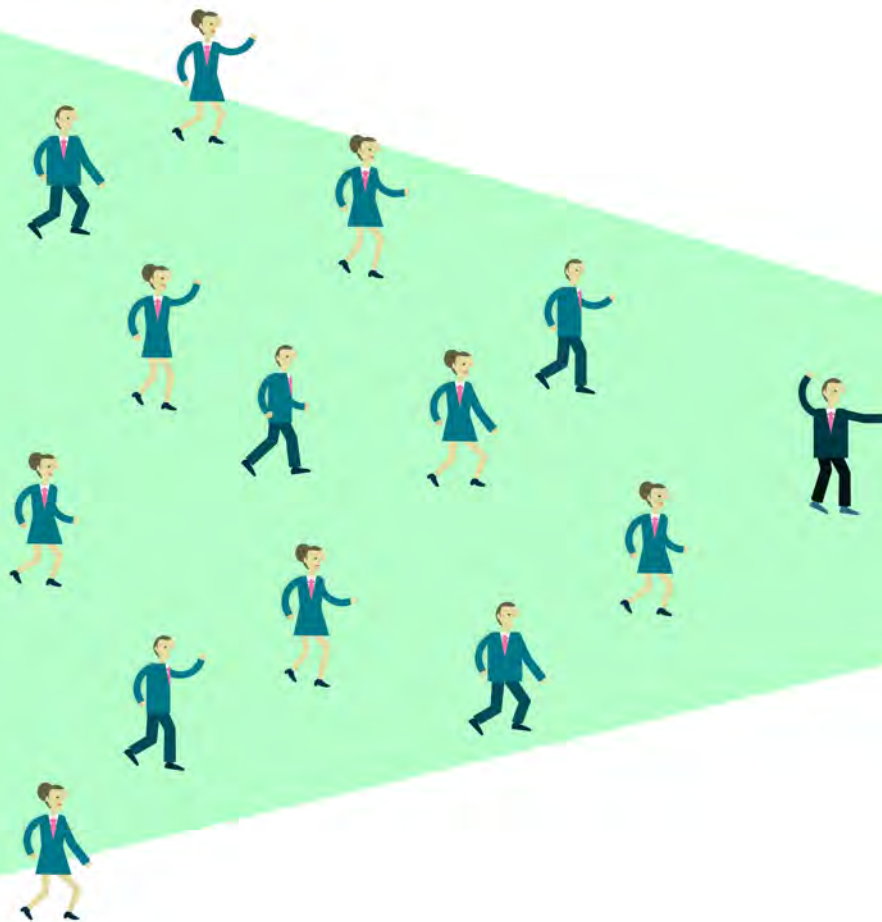
YouLeaD: Youth Leaders in the Diaspora

Next Generation of Overseas Filipinos in D2D



As our national hero Dr. Jose P. Rizal reminds us: the youth are our future, the hope of the Filipino nation. This is true even of the children of Filipino migrants who were born and raised overseas. The CFO recognizes them as a dynamic force that may be tapped for nation-building, in the land of their ancestors.

Thus, CFO looks to YouLead or Youth Leaders in the Diaspora to find their own path and show the way.





The Global Summit of Filipinos in the Diaspora is a biennial CFO activity which aims to highlight best practices of diaspora engagement since the launch of the D2D flagship program in September 2011.

Co-convenors



The Summit serves as one of the largest convergence of community leaders of Philippine associations worldwide. Participants include former Presidential awardees, leaders and convenors of the Global Filipino Diaspora Council (GFDC), US Pinoys for Good Governance (USP4GG) and other global Filipino networks, representatives from migration-related Philippine government agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), academe, private sector and multi-lateral agencies. The CFO intends to institutionalize and maximize OFs involvement in the socio-cultural and economic development of the Philippines through ten (10) major areas of interventions including skills and technology transfer, arts and culture exchange, educational exchange, business linkaging, diaspora investments, global legal assistance, advocacy and return and integration. The Summit also hopes to strengthen networking activity among OFs in the different regions of the world and accelerate participation of second and third generation OFs in the country's development initiatives.

THE DIASPORA TO DEVELOPMENT or D2D PROGRAM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines diaspora as members of ethnic and national communities who have left their countries of origin, but maintain links with their homeland. Nowadays, it may describe any population which is considered 'de-territorialised' or transnational'—loosely lumping together immigrants, temporary workers, ethnic and racial minorities, refugees, expatriates, and travelers ("Rethinking Babylon: iconoclastic conceptions of the diasporic experience." by R. Cohen. New Community 21 (1995): 5)

The D2D initiative provides the framework and strategies for engaging the Philippine Diaspora in the development of 10 areas of interventions:



UGNAYAN SA MIDDLE EAST**UGNAYAN SA NORDIC COUNTRIES****UGNAYAN SA ROMA****UGNAYAN SA ASIA PACIFIC REGION**

The Ugnayan Series presents an opportunity for CFO to enhance its relationship and strengthen its services for migrants. Through this project, networking among the growing number of Filipino community organizations can also be instrumental in encouraging diaspora philanthropic activities in support of Philippine development. In addition, the consultative meetings complement efforts to encourage participation of

Filipino migrants in the forthcoming national elections in 2016 through overseas voting, and to avail of financial literacy training to educate migrant Filipinos, especially prospective returnees, on sound financial management practices.

The Ugnayan series will result to a more empowered Filipino community as they will be encouraged to support and or participate in entrepreneurial and investment activities in their local communities in the Philippines. At the same time they will be introduced to the CFO's Peso Sense Program: The Philippine Financial Freedom Campaign which will enhance their financial literacy and management.



REMITTANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

It was a historic first for the Philippines and globally, when the CFO and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) jointly established in 2012, the Remittance for Development Council (ReDC). ReDC which is co-chaired by the CFO and BSP is a policy-recommending and advisory body composed of representatives from the government, private sector (banks and remittance service companies), civil society including the Microfinance Council of the Philippines, , academe and Philippine based international development agencies. ReDC serves as a forum for regular dialogue on remittance issues which include lowering of remittance costs, democratization of remittance channels, innovation in remittance services like the use of e-cash, advocating for increased financial education of migrants and their families.



In this image: Amando M. Tetangco Jr. (Governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas) and Imelda M. Nicolas (Secretary, Commission on Filipinos Overseas) during the MOA signing of the ReDC.



Philippine Schools Overseas (PSOs) are duly-registered educational institutions operating outside the Philippines and implementing the basic education curriculum of Department of Education (DepEd). PSOs are established to address the educational needs of children of Filipinos overseas, and eventually facilitate their reintegration into the Philippine educational system. The schools also provide a venue for the teaching and propagation of the Filipino culture and heritage among Filipino youth overseas, and serve as a locus for Filipino community activity.

The Inter-Agency Committee on Philippine Schools Overseas (IACPSO) was established through Executive Order No. 252 to serve as policy-making body and forum for discussion and resolution of issues concerning the establishment, operation and management of PSOs. Composed of five (5) member-agencies, the Committee is co-chaired by the DepEd and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). Other members are the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), and the CFO, which also serves as the Committee Secretariat.

As of 2015, there are 40 PSOs operating in 10 countries with an estimated 32,000 as of S.Y. 2014-2015 students currently enrolled, from pre-elementary, elementary, and high school levels.





National Commission on
Culture and the Arts



Office of the President of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS

VIRTUAL SENTRO *Rizal* 2nd Edition



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- Religion
- Symbols
- Tourism
- Traditions & Beliefs
- Visual Arts
- Women



Month of Overseas Filipinos

In 1988, Proclamation No. 276 declared December of every year as **"Month of Overseas Filipinos"**. Special projects and activities to give recognition to Filipinos abroad and to encourage their participation in development activities in the country are undertaken every December in observance of this occasion, organized by the Inter-Agency Committee (IAC) co-chaired by CFO.

Given the significant role of the media in the promotion and advocacy of migration and development concerns, the CFO launched the Migration Advocacy and Media (MAM) Awards in 2011. The MAM Awards recognize the positive and significant contributions of media outlets, institutions and practitioners, in both government and private media organizations in the Philippines and abroad who raise public awareness on issues relative to migration and development with particular attention to Filipino migration, advocate the cause of Filipinos overseas and promote their positive image. In 2014, ten (10) media works from six (6) countries composed of print articles and books, film and documentaries, websites and blog, and advertisement were recognized by the 4th MAM Awards.



Presidential Awards for Filipinos Individuals and Organizations Overseas

The Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas, established through Executive Order No. 498 in December 1991, is a biennial award conferred to distinguished Filipino individuals and organizations in recognition of their outstanding contributions to national development efforts, or their outstanding achievements in their field of profession. The awards, implemented and managed by CFO, are also conferred to foreign individuals and organizations that provide assistance to the country or advance the cause of Filipino communities overseas. As of 2014, there are 435 Presidential awardees from 49 countries. The program is managed by the CFO.



Entrepreneurial Self-Assessment App



You can now evaluate your entrepreneurial potential through BaLinkBayan's Entrepreneurial Self-Assessment Mobile Application. Use this interactive tool to help better measure your entrepreneurial traits and characteristics. The assessment will show whether you possess the competencies found in an entrepreneur. More importantly it will reveal which of these competencies are you strong on and which ones need some improvement.

After taking the test you will be able to view the Entrepreneurial Assessment Result. The result will indicate the level of your Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies. From there you will be able to determine your entrepreneurial potential and the areas that you need to improve on.

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